United States Election Assistance Commission
Roundtable Discussion
Be Ready: Contingency Planning in Elections

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VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

The following is the verbatim transcript of the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) Roundtable Discussion Be Ready: Contingency Planning in Elections was held on Tuesday, September 20, 2011. The roundtable convened at 9:02 a.m., EDT, and adjourned at 3:39 p.m., EDT.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

MS. LAYSON:

Good morning everyone. Welcome to Be Ready: Contingency Planning in Elections, a roundtable discussion hosted by the EAC, featuring local, state and federal experts. Today's discussion is in conjunction with National Preparedness Month, and it is the latest in a series of discussions about preparing for the 2012 federal election cycle.

Unexpected events happen during elections, as recent earthquakes and hurricanes remind us. Election officials throughout the nation routinely examine past emergencies and anticipate new ones to develop their community's election contingency plan.

The goal of today's discussion is to provide real-world contingency planning strategies to help election officials prevent, or minimize, interruptions in voting during an emergency or a crisis situation.

Thank you to Commissioners Gineen Bresso and Donetta Davidson and Executive Director Tom Wilkey for their leadership and support for this series of discussions. Thank you to EAC staff Emily Jones, Brian Whitener, Sheila Banks, Beverly Russell, and Deanna Smith for going above and beyond to make this roundtable a reality.

So, let's get started. This roundtable will be a two-way conversation. Tweet comments or questions at eac.gov, or use the hash tag BReady2012, that's the letter "b" ready2012, or submit questions or comments via the webcast. Election officials, please share your solutions and your lessons learned. We want your questions as well. Go to eac.gov for instructions. For those in attendance, the Twitterfall is located on the big screen to your right.

And now, I turn it over to Moderator Merle King, who is the Executive Director for the Center for Election Systems at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. Merle, please begin.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Jeannie. Welcome to all the participants here, today, and to those of you who are viewing the broadcast on www.eac.gov.

One of the overriding learning curves, it seems, in elections, is, we go through catastrophe, and then we do an analysis, and then we synthesize a plan that would have mitigated the catastrophe, now that we know what it is. For the past several months, here at the EAC, we've been doing a series of roundtables that really look at being prepared for the upcoming election cycle. And I think it's very appropriate that the September roundtable deals with election continuity, that is, how to keep our elections moving forward, and conclude them properly, according to statute, within the timeframes that are required, regardless of the events that we encounter.

So, as we go through the roundtable discussion today, I'll be asking the participants questions that, hopefully, will kind of drive

this topic down to the jurisdiction level, make it operational for the thousands of municipalities and counties that are looking at their level of preparedness for the upcoming election cycle.

There's just a couple of operational issues here, and one is that the microphones are live, and they're controlled from the folks behind the screen. So, you don't need to look for a switch on the microphones. So, the long-necked microphones will give you the public address system in the room. The smaller microphones on the desk are for the transcriptionist, and those may be repositioned as needed. But for right now, just speak normally and everything will be controlled for you.

We have a couple of hard breaks, because the folks that are managing our webcast for us require us to take some hard breaks during the day, so our first hard break will be at 11 this morning, and we'll try to really adhere to those schedules and move forward.

The first thing that I will ask the members of the roundtable to do is to introduce themselves, briefly, who you are, what you currently do, in elections. And what I'd like to do, Stan, I'm going to start with you and we work around the table this way. And then, at the conclusion of today, I'll also be asking you to summarize, kind of, your takeaways from today's roundtable, what are the things that you heard, what do you think are the most salient points that were made, and I'll start at this end of the table and work around. So, that's how I balance that out.

So, if I could start with Stan, a brief introduction please.

MR. STANART:

Greetings everyone, I'm Stan Stanart. I am the County Clerk and Chief Elections Official for Harris County, Texas. Harris County, half its population is Houston, Texas. So, that gives you an idea of where we're at, we have over 4 million population.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Stan.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Good morning, I'm Shelley McThomas, and I'm one of the Directors at the Kansas City Board of Elections in Kansas City, Missouri. We have about 230,000 registered voters in our jurisdiction and a staff of 26.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Shelley. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Good morning, my name is Keith Cunningham. I am the Special Projects Manager for Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, a position I've held since the beginning of this year. For the previous 13 years, I was the Director of Elections in Allen County, Ohio.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Keith. I'm going to move over to Damon.

MR. PENN:

Thanks, good morning. I'm Damon Penn. I'm the Assistant Administrator for National Continuity Programs at FEMA. Among my primary responsibilities are continuity of operations for the federal Executive Branch and continuity of government for the federal effort.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you, Damon. Trevor?

MR. RIGGEN:

Good morning, my name is Trevor Riggen. I'm the Senior Director for Disaster Services at the American Red Cross. In that role, my job is, basically, to make sure we show up to provide sheltering and feeding and casework and mental health and health services programs in times of disaster.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Trevor. Ed?

MR. SMITH:

Good morning, my name is Ed Smith. I'm with Dominion Voting Systems, where I serve as Vice-President of Certification and Compliance.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Ed.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

My name is Charlie Jagneaux. I'm the Clerk of Court of St. Landry Parish in Louisiana. Our parish has approximately 97,000 population and about 55,000 registered voters, similar to Stan's job in Texas. I'm Chief Elections Officer of the parish, also.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. And you go by Charlie, is that your…

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Correct, yes.

DR. KING:

All right, thank you Charlie. Well, this morning our first presentation that we'll use as a kickoff for a discussion of election continuity and

preparedness will be made by Damon Penn from FEMA. And with that brief introduction, Damon, I'll ask you to begin your presentation.

MR. PENN:

Okay, thank you Merle. And thank you everyone for having me here today. I'll talk very briefly about continuity, in general, and give you some ideas that can help you build your continuity programs or make the programs that you have, better. So, we're really talking from the macrolevel, but we'll certainly answer any questions or have any discussion at the macrolevel as we proceed through.

But, just a few slides kind of to help us to work together, you'll hear me talk a lot about essential functions. And that's what continuity is all about. That is the realization that if you have an event of some kind, you won't be able to do everything that you normally do, and understanding what's essential, and what it is that you positively have to do, is the critical element of building any continuity program. And from a federal perspective, voting is an essential function of our government. The President has eight essential national essential functions, those eight things that the Federal Government has to be able to do to survive, and from those, the 64 major departments and agencies have mission essential functions that all support those.

But, how do you -- where do you start and how do you develop a plan? As I mentioned, it all starts with what you absolutely, positively have to be able to accomplish. And I use our friends in Department of Defense as an example. If they have an

event, they are certainly not going to go to a second Pentagon. They're going to go to some place that gives them a basic capability to do what they need to do. One of the pitfalls when developing programs, though, is you decide where you're going to go, and after you decide where you're going to go and how many seats there are, then you decide who is going to go and what functions they're going to perform. And that's really the opposite way of putting the whole program together. What you should decide -- the way you should do it is decide first what you have to do, and then how many people it takes to do that, and then have an alternate facility that can accommodate what those people need to do. I ask you, too, to take an all-hazards approach to how you organize your plan. Sometimes we get stuck trying to develop several specific plans for several contingencies that may happen. That's not as important as having a very simple plan that everybody understands. So don't worry about whether you have a flood or whether you have a power outage or whether you have a hurricane. It's all the same if it requires you to move and do work or some portion of what you do at an alternate facility. So don't focus on what got you there, focus on what you have to be able to do after that happens.

I ask you, too, paramount is to make sure that you and the workers are safe and can take care of yourselves. The last thing that you really want to do is have the people in your voting precinct or your district or your polling place become victims. What you want them to be is become survivors, because they can't help anyone else until they can take care of themselves, and they can't

perform any essential functions if they don't have the basics of food and water and are healthy and can take care of each other.

I ask you too to think whole community and don't think that you are an island all by yourself. You have a lot of resources, at all levels, that can help you do what you need to do. At the local level, of course you have your emergency managers. You have your first responders. They can all be a part of your plan as you put it together. As that grows through the counties and precincts, you've got emergency managers at that level. And those, kind of all culminate at the state. And the state is really the highest level where you have organization. And the states then, if they need federal assistance, that's when FEMA gets involved, and they will come to us and identify what their needs are, and then, we'll help organize the federal effort to help provide those.

But, when I say whole community, I'll give you a very brief example of the whole community concept that my boss Administrator Fugate likes to use. There was a certain state emergency manager, and we won't say who it was, even though my boss was once a state emergency manager, but the task was to go out and buy cots to outfit the shelters. So, he went out and purchased the number of cots that he thought he needed to outfit the shelters. Once he got the cots set up, then he realized that the cots did not support people that had mobility issues, and you couldn't transition very easily from that cot to a wheelchair. So then, he bought some cots that were accommodating to people that needed access for wheelchairs. And then, he figured out how to organize those throughout the counties, and put them in the right

places and have the right wheelchairs based on what he thought the population was going to be. Well, then he found that a good portion of the population was no longer the size of a World War I soldier, which the original cot was designed to do. So, then he had to buy other cots that were sizeable for -- more sizeable for the common population that he had. So, the point is, had he thought whole community, he would have started with the cots that would accommodate everyone and been able to put those out, and then, only buy one cot, and not have to worry about how to move them around. So, when you think whole community, if you think about everybody you have to serve and everybody that's going to need access and going to need to work at your facility, then it makes it a lot easier than trying to figure out what the special groups may be and how you accommodate them.

And then, the last point that I'll mention to you is, include the media in what your plans are. Make sure you have a place for them to go. Make sure if you have an event that you know -- have someone that can tell them what the story is, and what is actually going on, because if you don't tell your story, somebody will figure out on their own what your story is, and it may not be the same story that you want told. So, a few talking points to reassure everyone that you have things under control and that you'll be able to continue to do what you need to do, you just need a few minutes to figure things out. And then, once you're ready to execute your plan and tell them what the plan is, then you get to put your story upfront rather than trying to go back and correct a story that someone invented for you.

A couple of other elements to consider as you're thinking about your planning, think about succession, and who in your organization will do what function. There's an old saying that the graveyard is full of indispensable people. So, you may think that you're an indispensable person, but what if you're sick on voting day? Who runs your -- who does your functions? Who does your duties? Do they know how to do those? Then, who, down the chain, continues to do all the things that need to happen? Think about your communications. In an emergency, everything tends to flow to wherever you can communicate, so all command and control seems to flow to wherever someone can talk. And it's the same for you when you're executing your duties. So, a few well-placed cell phones that are charged that can last for an extended period of time, some extended landlines, some other available types of communication that you may be able to get from your first responders would be something to certainly think about and work on.

I can't really over emphasize the importance of vital records, and this is a common problem throughout the continuity community, and a common problem when people develop plans. They don't really think about what to do with their vital records, and how to be able to access those if they have to move to another location. So, it's a good idea to, for those that you can, the very important documents, that you have a separate set that you can quickly take with you, to continue to do whatever operations you need to do. So, keep vital records in what you're planning.

And then, test and train and exercise for the unthinkable emergency, and make people understand what your plan and what your procedures are, and help them. Walk through it once or twice, so if something does happen, even if it's as small as a power outage, then they understand where they're supposed to go. And then, they become the calming voice and the calming figure at the site of the emergency, and they're the ones that help everybody else get through it.

And really, that's all I had for presentation, Merle.

DR. KING:

Okay, well thank you. I want to start by focusing on a point that Damon made about identifying the essential functions. I'm going to ask the election officials, if you would to think within the context of your jurisdiction, if you had to identify what are the essential functions that must continue forward with your election, and perhaps, even in what phase of the election, whether you're in the setup, whether you're in advanced voting, absentee voting, Election Day, tabulation, certification, you may have a different set of essential tasks.

Damon makes an excellent point, though, and it came out in studies, I know, after Hurricane Hugo years ago, that, in natural disasters, if you have a contingency or a continuity plan that is heavily dependent upon key people doing key things at key times in natural disasters, people go home; that the reality is, if your workers have to choose between the safety of their family and securing those vital records, it's a pretty quick choice that occurs.

But let's start, and I'd like to start kind of with Stan, and work down, and come back over to Charles, and get a sense, as he's talked, about it's important to know what your essential functions are. For election officials, what are those essential functions? Stan?

MR. STANART:

It goes across the whole gamut. I mean, like you said, it's where you are in any situation. And I think it's important for our election officials to sit down and have those discussions with their staff, what's important, what would we do in this situation, and also, training. And like you said, if you're going to have your staff -- if you're going to lose half your staff, if you had that depth of training then, I think that's the kind of thing that can still let you pull it off when you do lose half of your key staff. If everybody knows what other people do, and how to do it, I think that's very important.

And then, of course, back-ups of data, key data, don't keep it all in one location, you know. Keep it backed up. Keep it accessible, you know. We keep our data backed up in Arizona, as an example, in a secure site. So, you know, if you can get on the Internet, you can get to our data.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Stan. Shelley?

MS. McTHOMAS:

Originally, when you said essential functions, I think electricity, because without electricity we cannot have an election.

But going a little bit further, Mr. Penn touched on something regarding who does all those functions, and people leaving during

an emergency. And something we're big on is cross training. I always say to staff, is, do we pass the bus test? If you were hit by a bus on election morning, could someone else step in and take over your responsibilities? Because, of course, even though we would be concerned that you were hit by a bus, the election must go on. So, that cross training is very important and very essential, because most of our election office staffs are very small, and so, it's important that we all wear a lot of hats and all know what the essential tasks are on Election Day.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Shelley. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, first, I think that your emergency management team has to understand, when you solicit their assistance on the team, they have to understand what that means. As I watched the replays of the 9/11 disaster, I could only imagine how hard the firefighters in the lobby of that building were swallowing that day as they were being sent up the steps. And, you know, when you choose your team to manage these things they have to understand that they can't just go home in many cases.

And then, I think, when looking at your essential functions, and I'll talk about this in my presentation later, I think that you have to do -- in elections, there are basically two levels of emergency. One is what I'll call a catastrophic. It is going to shut you down for the day, and there you have to determine what it is that I need to save, how do I save it, so on and so forth. Then, there are temporary emergencies. Whether there's a fire or not, if a kid pulls

a fire alarm at a high school where there's a polling location, you're going to evacuate that location. There's no choice in that matter. So, that would be a temporary emergency. So, I think that how you handle a catastrophic emergency, versus how you handle a temporary emergency, that the things you need to do and the things you need to be able to prioritize are going to be different.

But again, I think the team has to understand that, fundamentally, you're the firefighter. You may have to stay here, and you may have to get us through this. And I think that's, probably, the first cornerstone of building a system that will save your bacon, when something goes wrong.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Keith. Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, all I can do is reiterate what the previous speaker said. Our basic function is to train poll workers, set up the voting machines, distribute them, and then, at the end of the voting cycle, to tabulate the votes. So, we have to be prepared for electrical emergencies, in which case, our machines are battery powered, so that takes care of that, training of the commissioners, and being able to replace them, or to supplement them in the voting precincts, if a disaster occurs, and then, to be able to tabulate the votes at the end. And, all of the time we have to consider the statutory limitations of that. You have so many days to be able to do all your functions. And if you, like Keith said, have to delay the election, then you have to worry about what's the time delay that are allowed by law. So, there's a lot of considerations besides just, you know,

being prepared. You have to almost duplicate every function that you have, at least on paper, or be able to.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Charlie. I'd like to come back now to Damon and ask a follow-up question. And, again, the folks who are watching our Webcast out there, typically, in small counties, small townships, may be wondering, where is a good starting point. So, if you could generalize the attributes of a successful engagement between the jurisdiction and state emergency preparedness, and federal emergency preparedness, what general advice could you give a jurisdiction about that step zero, about how to get ready to interact with your state and federal.

MR. PENN:

That's a great question. I think the first thing to do is to make sure they understand what it is that you're doing, and how you operate, and what is important to you. So, you really have to open the lines of communication. Emergency managers, from my experience anyway, don't necessarily understand the importance of an election, and running a proper election, and all the folks that you do on a regular basis and take for granted. It doesn't mean that they don't care. I think they just don't know. And it wasn't until I did a little preparation to come and talk today that I really understood a little more about how critical your functions are and how important it is, all the way down to a local level, for you to be successful in what you do, because our government really depends on you being able to do your jobs, for us to succeed as a government. So, I would start by just opening dialogue, and making sure they understand

where your polling places are, what kinds of things happen there, understanding that everything doesn't happen on Election Day, but you have several critical milestones that happen leading up to and following up on Election Day, and how you execute those kinds of tasks. So, I think that would be a great place to start.

And then, they can also be ready to answer their question, what can I do to help. We mentioned electricity several times. If that's a critical path for you, and you don't have a back-up, then certainly, ask for some kind of power generation as a back-up, upfront, and they can provide that and have that in place for you, in case you need it. So, those kinds of things, I think, are kind of where you can start.

DR. KING:

Okay. In your presentation, Damon, you also talked about the importance of not just the plan, but the planning process itself. And, could you comment on the attributes of a good plan, of plans that you've seen, or planning processes that you've seen? Are there common attributes, things that a jurisdiction that's looking to develop a plan should keep in the front of their minds?

MR. PENN:

Okay, sure. At the risk of being a broken record, again, what is essential, and it's easy to make everything essential, if you're not careful. But, what do you really have to be able to do? You certainly have to be able to, and I don't want to pretend that I understand what you do, completely, but of course, you have to be able to collect the voting. You have to be able to do those actions at the voting machine, and verify everyone's registration, those

kinds of things. Do you absolutely have to have the traffic control in front of the polling place? Maybe, maybe not. Do you have to have, gosh I don't know, what other kind of support things that you normally do, do you really have to have them, which, if they don't happen, you can still accomplish the mission that you're trying to do. So, start with those.

Also, develop a plan that is simple enough that everyone can understand what you're trying to do. And, I mentioned an all-hazards approach. Again, focus on what capabilities you've lost, and how you respond to those capabilities. If you develop 150-page plan it's probably a great plan, but how many people are going to read 150 pages? And how many people are going to know where to start when they have a problem? So, if you have something very simple, something as simple as, "If we lose power, we're all going to meet here at the vending machine, and that's where we'll start executing what we do," something as simple as that, can really get you started, really get you going.

And then, as I mentioned before, and was mentioned, as we went around the table, you have to make sure that all of your employees and everybody that is helping at the site can take care of themselves, and don't become victims. So, some emergency supplies for them, and some thought about how we help them communicate back with your families. Because, you're absolutely right, the first question that they're each going to have is, "Is my family okay?" Once you can establish that their family is okay and they feel comfortable with that, then they will refocus, and they will be everything that you need them to be, on the site. But, until you

get that basic question answered, it's going to be very difficult for them to maintain focus on what you're doing.

DR. KING:

Okay, I'd like to ask Ed a question. We heard from the election officials, initially, about what are the essential functions within their office, but we know, in elections, that vendors have a significant role in our preparedness and our execution of elections. And oftentimes, in the scope of our planning we look, perhaps, within our election office, maybe within our country or our jurisdiction, but we may not be aware of how our plan interfaces the vendor's plan. And so, Ed, I'm wondering if you can speak to the kinds of planning functions that a vendor looks at, particularly related to ballot printing perhaps, or ballot building. But give a sense of how vendors approach this planning function and how they attempt to interface with the jurisdiction's emergency plans.

MR. SMITH:

Thank you, Merle. So, from the manufacturer's standpoint, the manufacturers that are compliant to various models, ISO 27001, as an example, have compliance with some sort of a continuity plan. ISO 27001 requires a plan and it's a very structured, rigorous plan. What I find through my experience working at a few of the vendors and interfacing with some of the rest is redundancy being a primary tool to ensure continuity. So, for instance, Merle, you mentioned ballot printing. So ballot printing is, of course, taking product from the paper mill and bringing in computer files and applying ink to that paper, so that you end up with scannable ballots. So, redundancy would be having Wausau paper, Cascade, International Paper, as

available suppliers of the sorts of stock that you need to scan those ballots. Computer files, so there are the files that derive from the election management system, if the manufacturer is supplying that sort of data to the jurisdiction, and so, that data needs to be backed up. And vendors who have a continuity plan will have appropriate back-ups, so that they don't lose your data midstream and end up not being able to deliver the databases, the media and such, that you need on time, and get that data to you so that you can do your pre-election preparation. So redundancy, typical IT industrial standard back-ups are two of them, and then, of course, the plan for our own people. And, as Mr. Penn pointed out, taking care of the people is job number one. Taking care of the equipment and the consumables are job kind of number two and three, and then, you go into some of the nitty-gritty detail.

And I'd like to comment on what Mr. Penn just said. I'm a big believer, and I know other people in the industry are, likewise, big believers, in what I call "top ten cards." So, a top ten card would be, for the poll workers, what are the ten biggest things that can go wrong and what do you do about them? For instance, we know that voting machines have a two-hour battery back-up. So, at around, oh, 8:00, 9:00 in the morning my machine is beeping. What does that mean? Well, it probably means it's not plugged into the wall, or the wall outlet that you have plugged in doesn't have power. So, that would be a top thing. I'm expecting a paper tape to come out of the machine, but nothing is coming out. Well, you probably have a paper jam. So, those are the typical things that

occur on Election Day. And a card that's 8-1/2 x 11 that describes those makes a lot of sense.

Wallet cards, so for instance, "When the power goes out go to the vending machine." That can be on a wallet card. "Here is the call-in number to let somebody know you're okay. Here's the call-in number to obtain information or the Twitter account," or this or that. You can't always assume Internet access. You really even can't assume landline telephone access in serious situations. But provide some means for people to have a wallet card that just says, "Here are the four or five or eight basic things that you need to know so that you can continue forward if a disaster strikes." So, I'm a big believer in summarizing and simplifying to ten or fewer items, "Here's what you do," and giving people a wallet card or an 8-1/2 x 11 heavy stock piece of paper that says, "Here's normally what you will do."

DR. KING:

Okay, Ed, you mentioned ISO requirements for manufacturers require that level of planning and contingency planning. Are those plans appropriate to share with jurisdictions? If your customers were to ask for that plan, is that something that a vendor would be able to share? Or is there any proprietary information in that?

MR. SMITH:

I don't know why not. You know, I can't speak for all of the manufacturers, but at least, from Dominion's point of view, yes, we can share.

DR. KING:

It's worth a conversation, so perhaps…

MR. SMITH:

It is certainly worth the conversation.

DR. KING:

So, perhaps one of the things that we would recommend that jurisdictions look at, is making sure that not only do they look at their county emergency preparedness plans and how they integrate there, but look at their vendor's plans and see whether there's continuity, whether there may be some potential sources of conflict with the vendor, regarding those things.

MR. SMITH:

Yes. And to that end Merle, there have been a few RFPs I have seen that, at least have a check box for, "Do you have a continuity plan," and in one case that I can recall, that you needed to send it in. So, there is some forward looking thoughts with respect to ensuring the manufacturer has a continuity plan.

DR. KING:

Okay, I'd like to turn to Trevor and ask you a similar question. As you work with local chapters and kind of work down to the boots on the ground level, do you have advice and observations about organizations that are putting together their plans, and how to look for that upward integretability of the plan with state and federal organizations?

MR. RIGGEN:

Yeah, I think, much like Damon, plans are only as good as the paper they're on, if they're actually used. And they have to be simple. And I think the key of any plan is that it's simple and accessible, and that anybody that pulls it off the shelf is going to be

able to put it into action. If it's complicated, if it has, you know, a dozen sections that you have to look at to see what population am I dealing with, what community am I dealing with, it really has to be widely accessible, regardless of the situation, so multi-hazard, multi-situational, that you can really grab a hold of. And then, you trust your workers to define some specifics below that, but the plan has to be at that high level.

And, what we've done with our chapters is really say, you know, "There's five things you need to focus on," is, really get it down to essentials that keep the mission moving forward, should something happen. They need to open shelters up and make sure people are cared for and fed. They need to work with their government partners and be in the emergency operation centers or connected to the rest of the community. They need to start telling the story so the community knows what's going on, that they know where the shelters are, where can we get food? They need to start fundraising, because we have to keep that mission moving forward, and that's a key part of it. And they need to start talking to the clients, "What are your needs?" They need to find out what are people going through.

And if you can boil down your plan to, really, key essential elements that allow your polling sites or your headquarters, even to just move forward, and not think five days out, they need to think what am I going to do next, and there's a mission forward, and trust that there's some fallbacks to plan ahead for that, you're in a much better place. And then, disseminating the plan so it's not just the people in charge that understand it, but it's every volunteer, every

worker at the site, your emergency management partners, locally, need to understand your plan and have a role in it. Your community agencies do a lot of polling sites. I know, we're in other people's buildings, so they need to understand the plan of what would happen if that facility was isolated. So, really, getting that information out as widely as possible is really key.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Ed, I really like that wallet card idea. I'm going to think about that.

MR. SMITH:

Thank you, Merle.

DR. KING:

I had an experience, in the blizzard without power for five days, and really nursed my cell phone through it, thought I'm going to be good, until somebody told me the cell phone tower batteries will only last about eight hours, and I missed my window to make my outgoing calls. But, I like the durability of the notion of that wallet card, with the information that Trevor just put out, those five essential things to keep it moving forward.

I want to come back to Damon now and ask a question. In IT management, one of the things you cut your teeth on is the back-up. And we always use the phrase back-up and recovery effortlessly. The reality is we rarely recover. We're pretty good at backing-up systems, but it's pretty rare that we actually test our ability to recover a system. And part of that's because of the expense, and part of it's because of the complexity, and part of it is

we just assumed that because we can back it up we can probably recover it.

When you talked about the importance of planning, could you talk about some strategies for testing the plan, and whether that's, you know, tabletop walk through the plan or whether there are certain types of planning that require a more rigorous testing to have confidence that it's doable and workable. And then, finally, what is the periodicity of review of a plan? How good is a plan -- or how long is a plan good for? Does it need to be reviewed yearly, every time there's a significant change in technology? So, if you could talk about testing, what should be tested, if you have to cut back perhaps what -- everything is important but, as you say, you can't have everything important, where you might be able to find cost savings in testing, and then how often should you review your plan.

MR. PENN:

Okay. As Trevor said, testing doesn't have to be complicated. It is as simple as everyone knowing what they do if you have an emergency and where they go to meet. So, my first advice would be don't -- don't make testing so hard that you don't want to do it, but make it easy enough that you can execute it. Make it easy enough that people will participate and give their all to what you're doing. So, if you have a fire drill every day, sooner or later people get tired of doing the fire drill and they no longer move with a purpose to get out of the building. But, if you do it once in awhile, then it's much better.

And you can have scheduled tests and you can have unscheduled tests. And you do a scheduled test so that you can walk through and people are free to ask questions and make sure that they understand everything that's going on. And then, when you do the unscheduled test, that is to make sure that your overall plan does the kinds of things that you want it to do. But make sure no one is afraid of doing either one, that they're going to lose their jobs, or they're going to fail, or someone is going to somehow make it a bad thing because they went through this testing.

Frequency is really up to you and what you think is important. Again, you don't want to have car alarm syndrome, because nobody reacts to car alarms because they go off every time the wind blows. But at the same time, you want it to be enough where everybody is comfortable. So, I would kind of focus my schedule of recurrence, really, on personnel changeover, and when you've had some major changes in your staff, that's kind of a time to redo that. As you bring on volunteers, of course, you want to include them for the short amount of time that they're going to be with you, and other workers that are at the polling sites. So, you can schedule some tests and evaluations along those lines, as well.

DR. KING:

Okay, if I can, if I can kind of tip to some of the election officials. And Keith, I'll -- I see your hand moving, so I'll ask you first about some observations on the importance of testing, strategies for testing your plan at the local level, or at the state level, in your case.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Yeah, well, it's important. I mean, you've got to know if it works. It may look good on paper and you've got to know if it works. I love that car alarm syndrome. That -- I've never heard that before. And I think it is important that you do this in a way that people understand the significance of it. You really can't afford to downplay the significance of being able to react to and recover from a situation. And I think that's an important point.

The wallet card thing I think was very interesting, you know. Perhaps, you don't have to put a full-scale test into place, you just need to test elements of what you're trying to do, and make sure that some of the key elements you're -- I believe it's important that you identify the key points of failure and be able to manage those. Some things are going to go a lot easier than others, and you need to understand where your key points of failure are so that you can manage those in a prioritized manner.

DR. KING:

Okay, any other election official observations on testing? Stan?

MR. STANART:

Well, number one, running an election, you cannot fail, okay? You have to pull it off. So you have to build redundancy into your whole system, everything you do. You know, every polling location we have has, actually, two independent voting strings, as we'll call it, you know, a judge booth controller and the actual voting booths. But, we have two of those at each location. And then, we have -- behind that we have technicians, then, that can come out and repair something, if something -- they'll take care of ten polling locations each. And so, it takes a whole army when you have 736

polling locations going on. So, the more redundancy that you can build in gives you the opportunity -- if something fails you can still perform your mission. And I think it's important that we do that at multiple levels.

Let your IT people have back-ups, and have back-ups of the back-ups. I mean, it doesn't hurt to have your data -- your critical data in more than one location. But, let those guys do their job. They know how to do it. They know how to test it. My IT staff, they built it, and it's the same thing they use for the County Clerk as they do for my election department. So it's -- you know they're daily restoring back-ups for, you know, the normal processes. Don't do anything different or special that's not normal in their routine, where they're actually practicing constantly for what they do. You want -- your disaster response needs to be the normal. What would you normally do? That's where you want to get to. And, so it's important that -- it takes less training that way. You do something special -- try to do something different, it's going to make it complicated. And like Trevor said, you know, keep it high level. Keep it simple.

DR. KING:

Okay, Keith...

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Merle, I think that...

DR. KING:

...and then, Shelley.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Okay, I'm sorry.

MS. McTHOMAS:

No, go ahead.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

The unusual thing about approaching this in elections is that the election period is, in many cases, anywhere from, really, 15 to 30 days long. And the point at which the disaster or the interruption occurs, in your process, is going to have different effects on the process itself. So, if it occurs pre-election, during an early or absentee voting period, you're going to have sort of one set of dynamics. If it occurs on Election Day, it's going to be a whole different set of dynamics. And if it occurs sort of, you know, post-poll closing, say, the end of the day, as things are wrapping up, that's going to require another. So, I think that sort of phased approach in elections complicates it just a little bit. You've got different priorities that you have to deal with.

DR. KING:

Okay, Shelley?

MS. McTHOMAS:

Yeah, just to dovetail on that, I think elections administration, in general, is always about contingency planning, you know. We make a plan and we make a back-up plan and then a back-up plan to the back-up plan, because there's so many variables that we really don't control on Election Day. Someone once said, we deal in grenade throwing. You throw that grenade up in the air and you hope that it doesn't explode on you on Election Day. So, we're always contingency planning. And then, when you factor in the fact that we have -- we don't have 700 polls, thank goodness, but we all

have multiple sites out there with anywhere from 10 to 20 people running those polls, it adds that extra bit of risk, I guess, to the entire process. One thing that Ed said made me realize, we use a little wallet card that has all of our contact numbers on it, in case something happens, but we don't have our vendor's number on that wallet card. So that's something that we definitely, you know, should add.

I think it's also important to be aware of the chain of command, in terms of an emergency or a disaster on the local level and the state level. I think our law says that the Secretary of State's Office would inform us as to whether an election would cease or not. And I'm not sure I'm aware of how we would get that information, because if it's a terroristic attack or it's something, you know, very catastrophic, how would we be in communication? How would our Secretary of State's Office communicate with all the local election agencies or how would we communicate with them? So, that's something to consider.

DR. KING:

That is an excellent point. Just understanding to whom the authority shifts to make decisions on election-related matters is complicated. I heard a discussion about transporting materials on Election Day by emergency, and one of the suggestions was, use the deputy sheriffs. And somebody said, "What if the sheriff is on the ballot?" And so, even those kinds of things complicate how we think through implementing chain-of-command decisions.

Charlie, any observations?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, thank God for cell phones, because it sure helps us communicate between the polling places and the central office. And like you said about a hierarchy of command. In our jurisdiction, all of the decisions, as far as the distribution of the technicians and such as that, are all made at the central office, so it makes sure that nothing is duplicated and our resources are spread thin enough so we can concentrate them where they're needed.

And like Stan, and like every jurisdiction I'm sure, we all test our machines, test the voting systems, we train our commissioners more than they want to be trained a lot of times, but it makes everything flow a lot more smoothly. And I think it's just being prepared and being able to communicate with them.

DR. KING:

Okay. I'd like to address the next question to both Damon and Trevor, in terms of how you monitor situations for potential involvement of your agencies. And, for example, this time of year, I live in Georgia, I make sure I bookmark the hurricane trackers, so that I know where the storms are, where they're coming. Most election officials have a variety of bookmarks that they're following. From the national level, and Damon, if I can start with you and then go to Trevor, talk to us about what kind of things your agency monitors. What are the predictors where you escalate up to different levels of readiness? And then, if any observations you might have about how that could be communicated down to the jurisdiction level and implemented at a county level, per se.

MR. PENN:

Okay, that's a great question. First of all, all emergencies and all disasters are local. It all starts with what's happening in the local jurisdiction and what kind of assistance that they need to be able to take care of their citizens and move forward. So, our focus at FEMA, and Trevor will support this too, as one of our federal partners, really, is to be able to support and -- anticipate and support whatever they needs they have, locally. So, the most critical -- well, you can't be more than critical, because critical is an absolute, but the critical step in any disaster is assessing what the needs are; assessing what happened, assessing what damage there is, assessing what the needs for the citizens and the survivors are, and how you take care of those needs. So, the importance of the local level can't be over emphasized because that all starts with people going out and checking on their neighbors, that all starts with the local officials going from house to house, from neighborhood to neighborhood, making those assessments and sending them forward. And then, those needs that can't be taken care of at the local level get taken care of at the county level. If they can't be serviced, then the state level, and then, once a state has reached their saturation, then that's when the Federal Government gets involved, and that's when our part at FEMA goes as coordinators of the federal effort. But our federal effort is all in support of that local disaster and that local first responder. So, you never want to lose sight of that. So, anything you can do to help the local first responder understand what the situation is, then it all works its way up and that all makes what we do effective.

Now, post-Katrina, we were able to have some legislation passed, and some of our requirements at the federal level have been relaxed, and we can actually position supplies now and position resources near the area that's going to be affected, and lean forward, so to speak, as far as our response goes. And what we normally do is, using the hurricane as an example, Merle, is, we track it to what we think the affected area is going to be, and then, we move intermediate staging bases in where we have emergency supplies, and we have emergency equipment and we have generators and those kinds of things that we anticipate will be needed, we can get them closer to the area. The tricky part is making sure you don't put the supplies in the path of the storm. And that is much more difficult than it sounds, because using a hurricane example, for instance, that big cone that you see on the weather maps is, the weather service calls it a cone of -- they don't call it prediction, they call it a cone of uncertainty, is what they like to refer to it as, because somewhere in that cone is where the eye of the hurricane is going to be. It's not where the pretty line is drawn right up the middle, that's the mean, but somewhere in that cone. So, it could affect multiple states, it can affect multiple jurisdictions. So, there is some element of tactical patience involved in making sure that you get supplies there on time, but you don't get them where -- to a position where you put them in the path of the storm.

DR. KING:

Okay, Trevor?

MR. RIGGEN:

Yeah, you know, like any organization I think all of us have struggled with the financial aspect of how do we maintain a readiness and how do we decide when to respond. And one thing we've learned is, you can't maintain catastrophic readiness in every location, you know. No one can afford to have catastrophic readiness for the New Madrid Fault in Kansas City, and at the same time, a massive hurricane coming in the bay in Houston and in New Orleans. And so, it's this, how do you spread that readiness across. And one of the models we use, is, we centralize our readiness. Our capacity is dispersed across the country. So, our volunteers, our resources are dispersed across communities all over the country. But, we have centralized readiness, both in states, and then, here in D.C. at our national headquarters, where we maintain that 24/7 vigilance of what's going on. And, when that event starts to happen, we can spin out fairly quickly. And it's a similar model that FEMA uses, to be able to move resources in, when we see things start to happen, or in anticipation of something starting to happen.

I think the critical piece is trust your local eyes. And, in an election, maybe it's the person actually at the polling site. But don't guess -- second guess that person. Having that contact, whoever it is on the ground and saying, "What do you see? What's going on?" Seeing in is right sometimes, but having someone there, looking around and saying, "What's going on? Is it as bad as we're hearing or is it worse? What should we do?" And trust their judgment, that's really critical.

We had a situation this past weekend with the -- a tragedy of the air crash in Reno at the race, you know. And the media -- it was a significant event. There was, you know, several deaths, a lot of injuries, very tragic, but trusting our local chapter to tell us what's going on. We have a role in area aviation incidents, so we were ready to respond. But sending in too many people or causing too many things to happen can cause more harm than good. So, really trusting whoever it is there, in that community, to say, "Here's what it really looks like. Here's what we think we should do," and just letting them kind of be your guide on the ground.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. PENN:

Merle, if I could, something that Shelley said and Trevor mentioned this too, but to pull the two together, Shelley was talking about succession and how important that is. And Trevor reminded me that it's not only important that internally you know what the succession is and who is in charge, but it's also important that externally they know who is in charge. Because as Trevor mentioned, the first responder is going to be the incident commander. He is going to -- he or she are going -- is going to be the person on the ground that's making all decisions that ripple their way all the way up through national assets. So, they need to know who is speaking for your organization, and they need to know who they ask questions for and how they get information. I come from a military background and the military makes it very simple, because you wear a uniform, and when you walk in the room you

can tell who the decision maker is. There's not a real question. But you walk into a room in the civilian world and you're not sure who the decision maker is and who the note taker is. So make sure that the first responder knows who the decision maker is, and that will help as well.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Good point.

DR. KING:

Let me ask some questions of the election officials, because both gentlemen have introduced the notion of the importance of the role of the first responder, and in the elections world, that could be a poll manager, it could be a poll worker. My experience has been, in most jurisdictions, not much authority is delegated down to the poll manager, beyond what's required in the statutes on opening the polls, et cetera, and that there's, typically, specific directions to escalate any anomaly up to the county office, or perhaps to the state office, for resolution. So, I'm curious, from your perspective as a local election official, when you hear these gentlemen talk about that role of the first responder and placing appropriate confidence and trust, and I'll presume after appropriate training for that individual, what is your response to that? Is that something that you're doing in your jurisdictions? Is it something we could do better as a collective? And I'll just throw that out to any of the election officials.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Well, I think this is where it's important to have these relationships with our various agencies; the fire departments, police

departments, our local emergency preparedness agencies, and so that they are aware of our Election Day schedules throughout the year and it doesn't surprise them that, "Oh, today is Election Day." And so, that they know us and that we know them. They have our numbers, we have their numbers. I think that's very important. And it's something we learned in 2008 when our city manager's office offered to engage an emergency preparedness Election Day taskforce, and it really drove home all of those -- these kinds of things that we're talking about that we really hadn't thought about. This was my first Presidential election, so I was already on pins and needles, and then, to realize that we needed to think of all of these other contingencies in terms of electrical outages. So, our Kansas State Power & Light company also became involved in the taskforce. Our public works department, in terms of traffic control, became involved. So, the first thing is really communicating with all of these entities, I would think, and making sure that there are point persons and there's two-way contact with these various entities so that there's coordination.

DR. KING:

Good. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think this is pretty much like any other hiring situation. You've got to start by hiring good people, and then, you've got to trust and rely on them to do their jobs. Any sort of team environment is going to, you know, pivot on that. So, I think that the appointment of an emergency coordinator or a point person at each poll isn't simply finding a warm body that says they'll do it.

You really need to give thought to the people you're asking to do this. And you need to make sure that you've got the right people in place that are, "A," capable of making the types of decisions you need made; and "B" that you feel you can trust, you know, to make those decisions. Every once in awhile you're probably going to find yourself in a, "Gosh, I wish I hadn't done that," but by and large, if you approach it with a serious nature, you should end up with a team in place that you can trust.

DR. KING:

Okay. There's a maxim in management I often cite, which is, people will do what you inspect rather than what you expect. And I'd be curious to see if we looked at a broad cross section of poll manager training materials whether we address that, as a collective, across the country, whether -- certainly, we see it here, today, in the context of this conversation that -- the importance of that, but if it's that important, have we integrated it into our poll worker training? And, as you say, when we recruit and develop is -- does that have a place in the hierarchy? I know it does in Harris County, now.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Now.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Like I said…

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Now.

DR. KING:

But what are your reflections on that, Stan?

MR. STANART:

Well, the -- our precinct judges, they basically have the authority to run and execute the precincts. They are in control and in charge. When something goes beyond, though, what their experience and training is, of course, they have to depend upon my office and the experts, there, if we need to go to another polling location if, you know, we need to any kind of thing that they can't handle. Actually, in Texas, our election judges have the authority, on Election Day, of being the same as a state District Judge. They can have someone arrested. I mean, they do have a fair amount of authority, and, you know, they are trained to use their authority with discretion, and, of course, we're there to support them and help them, because they don't do this every day, and they're not going to know what to do without help. But it's -- if it's beyond what they do, they're going to need more. And that's where the professionals, you know -- you've got to have a professional core team that know what to do when it's beyond each levels of training.

DR. KING:

Okay, and Charlie, any reflection on that first responder?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I may have given the wrong impression, at first, when I said -- talked about centralizing the authority to perform different functions. But similar to Stan's jurisdiction, I tell our commissioners in charge that they're the poll sheriff. They have the authority, just as Stan's commissioners -- or judges, in Texas, are called to -- they're completely in control of the precinct. They can have -- they have

the authority to call the authorities and have someone arrested if they interrupt or disrupt the voting process or violate any of the campaign laws. So, when you tell people that, they take that responsibility pretty serious. And we give them the tools to be able to execute their job, too.

So, it works both ways. We have to -- the major functions we have -- or emergencies, we can deal with at the office, if they contact us. But, the Election Day routine things, they are completely in control of that precinct.

DR. KING:

Okay, very good. I'd like to come back to Damon and ask a question. And I know, many times in the discussions about natural -- about disaster planning, we naturally think about natural disasters. I guess, it's almost redundant. But one of the things so true about elections, it's an incredibly human intensive experience, it's run by humans, they're at every stage in the process. Does FEMA look at contagious diseases; flu outbreaks, those kinds of things? And any observations about disaster preparedness on issues that may be related to an influenza outbreak or some other contagious disease that could impact the availability of not only our poll workers, poll managers, but then, also, the voters who may come out?

MR. PENN:

Yes, we've got several national level plans for dealing with contagions. The work that we did a couple of years ago with the H1M1 virus really set the stage for us to get that planning started.

We worked very hard with HHS and come up with some national-level plans.

But again, your state and local emergency managers have state and local plans, as well, and they can help you tap into the kind of resources that you need to able to deal with that. But if something happens on a national level, I feel very confident that we have a plan that we can execute and be able to take care of our population. And from that, I think all our state and local officials have built plans to support, as well. So.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Yeah, I think about the average age of our poll managers and the impact that an influenza outbreak could have in that environment.

We're going to do a little bit of a switch here between Trevor. And while that switch is occurring between Damon and Trevor, I want to come back and ask Shelley a follow-on question about working with your local utilities, other providers. How approachable were they? How easy was it to interface? And I ask the question in context of a local jurisdiction that may be following us on the webcast, if you could share with them what that was like.

MS. McTHOMAS:

They were very approachable. I think, maybe, one of the bullet points that we should add, in terms of this discussion, is that it's important to somehow let these entities understand that it is in their best interests that we have a successful Election Day, so that they will feel involved and engaged, because if there is a problem, of course, we have to call on them, and so, if they're caught off guard,

you lose time, you could lose lives. And so, sharing with them why we wanted to have this kind of a taskforce put together and what their possible role could be, and identifying what their support could be caused them to be very amenable to coming to these meetings. We started the meetings about this time in 2008, and we had them, I think, every two weeks or every three weeks, and all the way to Election Day. So, our power and light company was very agreeable to being involved and had someone at the meetings all the time. And we needed them on that day. We had some power outages at a couple of the polls, and so, we had that immediate contact, because they had been meeting with us, and they responded right away, whereas, you may have had a slower response had they not been at the table.

DR. KING:

And, certainly, it sounds like your jurisdiction got a lot out of the meeting with the utility company. Do you think the utility company picked up some additional insight, in terms of the things that go on on Election Day, that may perhaps not change their priorities, but at least, increase their appreciation for the challenges?

MS. McTHOMAS:

I'm sure they did. I'm sure that they did. There were comments made by the particular representative, and I think we all experience that, that people outside of our industry have no idea what goes on. They show up to vote, and their ballot is there and the poll workers are there, and they don't think about it. And once they know the behind-the-scenes planning, all of the logistics that take place, they do get a better appreciation. And as a result, even though we've

not had to contact them since then, as we start this 2012 planning year, because they've created a bit of a monster, we want that same kind of taskforce put together in Kansas City, so that we'll have that security blanket like we did in 2008.

DR. KING:

Okay, very good, thank you. Ed?

MR. SMITH:

And Merle, in addition to the power company, the telecommunications provider. Cellular, as well as landline, are also very handy to relate with and understand. I know back in 2006 and '07, I was the project leader for Sequoia for the City of Chicago and the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, and Verizon who was their provider, have a very close relationship, and we, as the vendor, were also involved in that. They transmit the votes downtown over the cellular system before they then read them all in manually, and canvas them later. But regardless of that, they also provide the polling places with a cell phone, and so, having cell phone infrastructure is extremely important to their success.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Ed. With that change that we've now accomplished, Trevor has joined us up at the front table, and he's got a presentation on the Red Cross approach. So, I'll turn it over to you.

MR. RIGGEN:

Thank you, Merle, for allowing me to be here. I kind of feel like the old Sesame Street show where, "Which of these things don't like the others?" I'm definitely not, you know, the election official.

[Laughter]

MR. RIGGEN:

But hopefully, what I can share by how we interact with partners, and how we leverage that to be ready will be useful today. I can't let an opportunity ever go by where we can't talk about our mission, just to share a little bit -- and to give a little bit of context about where our tools come from.

So, we operate with a bunch of chapters, a bunch of local sites. So much like cities or counties, we have a bunch of local sites. Our biggest workforce is our volunteers. We have about 50,000 trained disaster volunteers around the country that deploy, basically, at a moment's notice. Right now, we have about 4,000 volunteers deployed up and down the East Coast from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Irene -- Tropical Storm Lee, working in floods and different situations. And, of course, the wildfires in Texas, right now, we have a large workforce dealing with those.

We respond -- the big events are the ones you see on the news. What we do most of the days are single-family fires, and about every 80 seconds we respond to a single-family fire somewhere in the country, where we make sure somebody has a safe place to stay and emergency clothing and some food. And that's the disaster that we really try to be ready for, is that day-to-day disaster, what's the most common thing we have to deal with, making sure we can carry that mission off. The big ones are, in some cases, a little bit easier because the resources are coming from a lot of different places. You have the Federal Government involved. You have your state government that can assist you. It's

those day-to-day issues that can really break down if you're not prepared, locally.

So, big lessons the last ten years, we've had people refer to it as the decade of disaster. In 2000 to 2010 we've had just a bunch of big disasters and we continue to face that. And we learned a lot from those, as an organization, as -- I think as a country. But what I want to focus on, I always love that first one. It's catastrophic, change your model.

[Laughter]

MR. RIGGEN:

If something happens that's so big that just changes the face of your community, you have to rethink how you do things. You have to simplify, you have to scale it back, you have to focus on the important things. You have to change your model.

Citizens are you first responders. Those are the ones that are going to help first. Those are the ones that are going to take action. It's going to take, if it's not minutes, it's going to be hours for actual first -- trained first responders to arrive onsite. So, whoever is in your polling site, if something happened, those are going to be your first responders. Those are the people that are going to help. Look at your demand, not your supply. So, don't worry about how many cots you have in the warehouse, focus on how many cots you need. And talk to your community about what that need is, and then try to meet that need. Really focus on that demand.

Manage expectations, is always one we always face, you know. Don't oversell yourself either to your local partners or your

community on what you can perform. What I want to focus on, though, is get to know your partners before you need them. And, you know, a lot times, in a disaster, we talk about, a disaster is not the right time to be exchanging business cards. You should already know those players before something happens. You shouldn't get to know your Office of Emergency Management once the disaster happens, because at that point in time, you're not on their radar. You're not someone they're going to turn to, because they have a lot of other issues, and a lot of other players who are already in the Rolodex. So that's, you know, your local NGOs, your local non-profits, government, obviously, and then, the public, I think, are all three partners that you need to know before you need to work with them.

This is just -- post-Katrina, really, we started to turn towards a partner-based response structure. And I think this is instructive for how you build your models for your sites. These are just a sampling of the partners we work with every day. This isn't even on the big disasters. This is what we do every day for single-family fires. These are the types of partners we collaborate with. What we found was, no one is big enough to do it alone. And you need to make sure their leadership is engaged, that your partners are engaged, they feel empowered to be a part of the solution. If you're using someone's location -- we use people's shelters all the time, we use their facilities. Red Cross doesn't own any shelters. When we use that facility, it's empowering that -- whoever owns that facility, whether it be a church or a local government, that they are

part of that planning, that they're a part of that solution, that they have a voice to begin to make a decision.

And this is really the model we shifted to. And this is, you know, I think is really instructive. Pre-Katrina, we really focused on, we had Red Cross shelters, you had other community shelters and they were all somewhat isolated. People were running their own facilities, they weren't well connected, the resources weren't matched up, we weren't able to hear what the demand was. Today it's a very integrated system. So, it could be Red Cross working in a shelter administered by someone else, a county or local government. It could be a government shelter that the Red Cross has provided training and resources to, or a church or a community center. But all of them follow the same basic guidelines and have the same plan and know the same triggers on who to call for help, and who's in charge. And, really, it's a workforce multiplier, and I think it's something anybody who is providing local services you want to find that workforce multiplier. How do we provide the most bang for our buck?

Government, so, this is just an eye-chart, I won't read through this, obviously, but these are all the places that we make sure we have Red Cross presence in a large event. These are all -- you know these are all the federal acronyms. This is out of the FAT book. Of all the different sites that stand up was state, local and national, in a disaster. And it's important that we have presence. And, really, what I wanted to share with this, is they need to see your face. If something happens, the emergency managers need to know there's an election going on. They need to

be able to talk to someone who is dealing with that election and have that face-to-face contact. And that can start at the county EOC, at your county emergency operations center, and then, roll all the way up to the state. Or, you know, if it's a very large event, if a joint federal office stands out, to have a presence there or just, at least, visit the officials there, so they know what are you dealing with, what are the anticipated risks, needs. But really making sure you have someone who speaks that language, understands the world a little bit, and can walk in and share the critical information that's important because it's a lot of sites. You can't be everywhere, but having those volunteers or those employees who know that relationship. And I think, you know, having worked with volunteers for a long time, we share a lot of the same volunteers. We share a lot of the same people who are involved in elections, who are involved in disasters, who are involved in community development. So, there are resources that already have that skill set embedded, probably, in your teams. So, how do you identify those? How do you bring them forward? How do you leverage them when you need to, is important.

Social media, this is one that really took off after Haiti. We had been leveraging social media back as far as, really 2008, in a big way, but the community wasn't leveraging it quite as severe. And even today, the fact that we're monitoring Twitterfall, that we're receiving questions and putting out answers via Twitter is a huge change from just 18 months ago, that wouldn't have happened. And what we really tried to do is, how do we listen? So, when you're working with your partners, how do you listen? And the

community being a huge part of that, how do you let them tell you what your needs are, knowing that you can't wait to drive up and down every street? People are going to -- if they know you're listening, they're going to tweet things, they're going to post it on their Facebook page, they're going to post it on your Facebook page. If you don't have a Facebook page as an Election Commission, I would suggest getting one. And the public are looking for ways to grasp a hold of information, and social media is just a fantastic tool. There's risks inherent in that, obviously, but it's a fantastic tool to reach so many people in a very quick amount of time.

We did a survey, we've done it twice now, we did it this past year, and what we found was the public expects us to monitor social media. Their expectation is that government is watching Facebook and Twitter, that they're paying attention. And they also have a huge expectation that when they post need for help, we're going to show up. When they post it on Facebook, when they post something on Twitter, if they post that need someone is going to see it and someone is going to respond. We've created that expectation as a country because we are monitoring, because we are talking about it, we are using it. So, we have to be aware of it in disaster, because that expectation actually increases in a disaster.

So, we're working closely -- right now, we have digital volunteers that sit across the country that monitor social media, that look for what people are posting as far as needs, look for trends in the information. And then, we aggregate that and then we look for actual items. So, if one person tweets, "I'm hungry," we don't send

1,000 meals into that community. But, if we see 500 people post, "I'm out of food," you know, in Harris County, we're going to send in a bunch of vehicles full of food. It's really just paying attention to what those trends are. And I think knowing your workforces are small, it may not be possible to actually monitor, heavily, that action. But, actually creating a presence of being ready to respond with, you know, "The election schedule has changed because of some event," you've had to change the times or the locations, you've had to consolidate locations because you've lost some of the facilities, being able to post that through social media is fairly critical, not only for the people who read Twitter, but the press pulls off of Twitter. During Haiti, our public affairs manager would get up in the morning, I would send her an e-mail of how many people we had in shelters from the repatriation. This would be like five in the morning. She would go on her Twitter and post it and within five minutes it would be running on a scroll on CNN. And that's how fast they pick up off, you know, valid, you know, Twitter sites. People -- the media is really picking up on it, so being ready for that and leveraging that is really critical.

So, you know, essentially I think the key is just as far as preparedness is really making sure you're connected with your local partners. And don't limit it to the traditionals. Don't limit it to just your Office of Emergency Management. They're obviously one of the most critical partners, but the owners of your facilities are critical whether they're churches or schools, community centers. They need to be aware. They may have other uses for that facility

in times of a disaster, so understanding that situation and being able to have that conversation when the time comes is helpful.

And then, you know, leveraging your partners to know how do you take care of the people who are in your building. I think if an event happens at a polling site or in that community, the people who are there voting at that point in time are going to look to you to say, "What do I do next? Do I evacuate? Do I run? Do I go to a shelter? What do I do?" They're going to be looking to someone in charge to say, "Tell me where to go." And so, having that connection with who makes those decisions and knowing those plans ahead of time is critical because they will turn to you for advice and counsel. And we don't want to push them in the wrong direction, because it will cause more harm than good.

And, obviously, please reach out to your local chapter. I think they can be a valued resource to you in a disaster, in planning and preparedness, and also, in the event itself. It's a resource you can call on to assist at any time.

DR. KING:

Okay, Trevor, I want to follow-up with a question about the use of social media. And I think across the country election officials are experimenting with social media, and some are clearly very aggressive and successful, but the majority are still in a wait-and-see mode. And it strikes me, from your description, that there may be an erroneous conclusion being reached by election officials about the use of social media, that because there's no disaster happening right now, I'm not getting much traffic, therefore, I wouldn't get much traffic in the case of a natural disaster. Could

you comment on what happens to usage level and the expectations when there is a disaster?

MR. RIGGEN:

Yeah, social media is an interesting phenomena. You have to create a brand. And I think it's critical that you're out there using it day to day and not just when you need it most critically. So, for many of us we're using it most critically when that event happens, when we need to get information out or in, we're leveraging it. But the public has no idea that you exist as a resource. They're much less likely to turn to you when that disaster happens. They're not going to search for the Twitter handle of the Election Commission if something happens if they've never -- if they don't know -- anticipate that you are even on Twitter, for example, or Facebook. So creating that brand, creating opportunities to have discussions, whether, you know, different times of the year to get people involved, leveraging that, leveraging your volunteers and your workforce to start monitoring it, to start using it. If you look today on our schedule using the hash tag for BReady2012, you know, create those hash tags ahead of time. Leverage it throughout the year as a way to talk to the public about elections, and then the public is much more likely to find you when the time comes. And that brand is really critical. So, we monitor, you know, obviously, you know, Red Cross, we have our own Twitter account for the organization. We've also encouraged our entire workforce to use Twitter and Facebook to leverage that as an opportunity to talk about what they do day to day, get people interested and excited about the organization, and then when a disaster happens they can channel

that to share where shelters are, to share where food is, to talk about the needs. It creates just an army of people using that tool instead of just one account.

DR. KING:

Okay. Does FEMA have a comparable social media strategy?

MR. PENN:

Yes, we do, and our administrator is very heavy into social media. I, unfortunately, am not, I'm kind of a dinosaur, but he is slowly convincing me.

As an example of how he used it, several months ago, now, we had an industrial accident in one of the southern states, and the initial reports on the news were of a terrorist event and several other things. But, by going on social media and looking at the kinds of postings that people onsite were giving, then he quickly determined that this was not a terrorist event, but was an actual accident, and he went to bed. And two-and-a-half hours later our command center called him up and told him that it was a natural event and he could go -- that it was an accident and he could go back to bed.

[Laughter]

MR. PENN:

But, that's kind of an example of how you can use social media and just how you can get a feel for what is happening on the ground and get a better understanding of the way things are transpiring.

I also talked to a young man that was in the Virginia Tech shooting, who was actually a part of that, and asked him how social media impacted what he was seeing on the ground, there. And I

found it quite interesting that he said that he could very easily discriminate between messages being posted by friends and their perspective and what was going on, but that once the authorities came up and they started giving the ground truth and giving instruction, then he could differentiate that as being what he needed to do versus what everybody else was saying was happening and put the whole picture together. So, I was somewhat surprised at how discriminate he could be in reviewing all the different postings, but he said that it was quite easy and that he had a much better picture of the overall situation by doing it.

So, I think there are a ton of uses and we're just starting to scratch the surface, as Trevor said.

DR. KING:

I think Trevor made a very valuable observation that a disaster is not the time to exchange business cards, nor would it seem the time to establish your social media presence; that that needs to be established well in advance of the event.

Shelley?

MS. McTHOMAS:

I think the use of social media is very, very important, not only during a disaster, but because on any given Election Day, we need to instantaneously disseminate information, because there's been a power outage at a poll and where those voters should go or what we're doing about it or, we never like for this to happen, but you've run out of provisional ballots. And so, social media is an excellent way to communicate with your constituency, the voters, the public, as someone said, so you get your message out and your story out

before the media gets it out for you. It's a way to really stay on top of all of these kinds of smaller disasters that can face us on any given Election Day.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Merle?

DR. KING:

Yes, Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I wanted to add something too. I'm sort of a dinosaur when it comes to social media, myself, but I've been slowly building up friends on my Facebook page.

But when you think of the problems facing government nowadays, in regard to costs and the budgets and the reductions in budgets, and such as that, social media seems like the most cost effective way to communicate. And from what I get from Mr. Riggen's and Mr. Penn's presentation is the main thing is communicate, communicate, communicate and share and share and share. And social media is a perfect way to do it and, like I said, probably the most cost effective way to do it, too.

DR. KING:

Um-hum. Do you have a social media policy now at your office?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I will when I get back.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

That's a great answer. I have really a question I'd like to pose to Stan and Charlie, and it ties into a point that Trevor made about the

work of the American Red Cross is predominantly dealing with hundreds of small disasters in a day, and in election administration we have lots of small events that can deteriorate the quality of election, and then we have the occasional spectacular event. And I think what I heard in Trevor's presentation was the advice to pay attention to the small details because they will eventually eat you. And you had a catastrophic event, and certainly, in St. Charles Parish, you had a catastrophic event. Has it changed what you focus on? Has it drawn your attention away from the small things? And what advice could you give jurisdictions about maintaining that proper calibration between the small disasters that occur frequently versus the catastrophic disasters that are huge?

MR. STANART:

What we learned is you have to do things the same way. We run elections and that's our mission and that's what we have to be able to continue to do. And when you try to deviate and try to come up with another way of doing things, your people don't -- they're not trained. They're not -- so you're model is to try to get back to the same thing. And that's what we've found and that's we're able to do. And, you know, this afternoon we'll go through the story of, you know, our 67 days before the election, and explain what happened and what we did. And I think it will be enlightening for everyone.

DR. KING:

Okay. And Charlie before you respond, I apologize, I said St. Charles, and it's St. Landry Parish, excuse me.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Right. Well, actually, my experience comes from helping out in New Orleans after Katrina's dance through there. But the main thing that comes to my mind is the people, and I think everybody has pretty much stressed that. The psychological affect on those people, as well as having to realize that they had a disaster at the same time your office did also. If you can provide for them, it helps them to come back to work sooner and it helps you to have at least a minimum staff to take care of the immediate problems that are there. I think, especially in Katrina, and probably in your catastrophe, too, the time lapse between getting your staff back in order and getting a functioning office, that's critical, because I know in Katrina, they were out of pocket for quite awhile because of the disruption in the utilities, the flooding that still remained there, all the infrastructure was destroyed. So it took them quite awhile. But you could tell by the look on the staff's faces how traumatized they were even months afterwards. And I think the people -- the staffs and just people, in general, that's probably the major -- should be the major focus of any administrator.

DR. KING:

Trevor, I'd like to come back and ask you a question regarding the partnerships. I think in one of your first slides, and would you mind going back to the slide, I think you had the interface between the American Red Cross local chapters? I think it's one more past -- one more, right there.

MR. RIGGEN:

This one.

DR. KING:

And again, it's a very rich slide that shows there are many potential relationships that have to be built and maintained. For the jurisdiction, the election official out there, who may be watching us on the Webcast, and wondering, "To whom is my first call, when I take a break who am I going to call first," could you give some general advice about what you've seen as successful models of starting these partnerships, kind of from the ground up?

MR. RIGGEN:

Yeah, I think the key -- and the one thing I do hate about this slide is that the local -- you'll see that local county emergency operation center is one of the smallest boxes on the page. And that really is your first point of contact. And I think where things, in a disaster, even for us, can get sideways, if we start talking to the state first or stop talking to the Federal Government first. We have to talk to the country first, or parish. I mean, it really has to be whoever that local county person is, we need to start talking to them first, and say, "What do you need?" And ask them, "What are you facing? What do you need? What can we do to help?" And that changes the dynamic of the conversation, changes the expectations, you know. You're looking to meet that demand instead of focusing on the supply. You're not looking -- the county official doesn't want to know how many cots you have in their county, they want to know how many people have to need a cot and how many can you serve.

So, I think that's really -- you know, making sure you know who to call at EOC and there probably is someone set aside, probably not just for elections, but someone who would be your point of contact and being able to reach out to them right away and

say, “This is the situation we’re facing.” But I think that’s the first place to start. Obviouslyk at your organization level you’re going to have someone who is probably talking to the state. They’re going to be talk to the state, you know, to the governor’s staff or someone about what’s going on. But you need, in a disaster mode, that instant commander is that local person. They’re making decisions that will drive what happens that day, in that community, and so really, that’s your first call.

DR. KING:

Okay. One of the things that election officials do, is, we make up packets. We have packets of all kinds of stuff. We’re always looking for new kinds of containers and ways to seal them, et cetera. And it seems to me that one of the packets, one of the packages that we should be looking at as election officials, is our emergency packet. What goes in that? What kinds of things should there be in every election office or in the trunk of every poll worker’s car, poll manager’s car? What kind of advice, and I’m going to also ask Damon the same question, but what kind of advice could you give election officials about that emergency preparedness kit that they may want to pack along with their provisional ballots and all the other things we send out to precincts?

MR. RIGGEN:

Sure. Yeah, having a kit it’s something the Red Cross does quite a bit, too, and the Federal Government pushes quite a bit. And I think to Keith’s point earlier on, you’re going to have workers that their job is to stay there, is to actually make the mission happen. They don’t really have the luxury of saying, “I’m going to leave and

take a break." They need to make sure that mission happens, just setting that expectation. So the kit -- what will they need if they need to stay at that site for a day, for two days? Do they have medication they need? It's the basic things that you would think of, you know. Have they notified their family? Do they have all their contact information? A kit doesn't have to be a big bag. It can be a manila folder full of all the names and numbers you need to call or reach out to if something should happen. That's one piece of it, for the individual.

And then, the other piece, for the site, I think is, you know, what are the things you need to have in place for your back-ups? If you have to move to a paper system right away, what does that look like? Do you have a container that does that in a rush? If the power goes out, how do you deal with that? And then, from an emergency management standpoint, I'd say, how do you turn that polling site into a shelter? If the Federal -- if the government comes out and says, "You need a shelter in place for the next eight hours, because a HAZMAT situation has happened and there's a cloud somewhere over the community," the public will be turning to you, there, to say, "How do we turn this site into a sheltering place location?" And so, really knowing how to do that, you know, knowing the facility, well, so you can make those decisions in a hurry, and being ready to take care of people and knowing they're going to reach out to you to ask for help. There are contingency plans on how to get resources to populations sheltering in place, but you have to know who to call. And having that emergency management know where your location is and where you may have

what most days has one or two people, all of a sudden has a couple hundred people in a location that were in line, and all of a sudden you have a significant humanitarian issue, and who do you turn to. So, I think having those material assets in your kit, but also, just the informational points that you can turn to, are really critical.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Damon?

MR. PENN:

Well, your timing is really great on this. This is National Preparedness Month, and one of the things that we've done on ready.gov is added several checklists for individuals and for organizations on what you need to do to be ready, and what those packets should look like. So, if you just go to ready.gov, I think that will give you a great idea of where to start and what you might need.

And also, if you go to fema.gov, on the continuity page, as you work your way through the menus there that will help you get to some of the other resources that I talked about for developing your continuity plans as well.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. PENN:

So, ready.gov and fema.gov, because I don't do good with details on all the dots and slashes and everything else.

DR. KING:

Is duct tape in those kits?

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Let me ask another question about online resources. And you mentioned two Websites, ready.gov and fema.gov. And I'm sorry Trevor, I can't remember your organization's...

MR. RIGGEN:

Redcross.org.

DR. KING:

Redcross.org. Could you identify any other online resources that election officials may want to book mark, may want to go out and explore as a part of assessing where they are in their preparedness?

MR. RIGGEN:

I mean, obviously, I think between ready.gov and redcross.org are two great places to start. There's great resources on ready.gov. On redcross.org we have what we call tear sheets that both, you can use online, but you can also print out and share with sites. It gives a list of different types of disasters; hurricanes, floods, power outages, what are the critical things and steps you need to take. And those are great even after the event to have available for different sites. So, to Keith's point earlier, about an election takes place over 30 days, well, you know if a hurricane happens 15 days before the election, what are the things you need to get out to both your public and your workers on what they need to do to be ready for that day, because that event is still happening two weeks later after landfall. So, I think those are two great locations.

I think as far as being ready to monitor critical places, if you live on the Gulf Coast or on the East Coast, you know, the National

Hurricane Center is a tool you want to have on your computer screen every day, and really, looking to see what are folks saying about what's going on, your local news stations. I mean, they're just some, really, basic sites to have at your fingertips.

But as far as a readiness tool, I think FEMA and Red Cross are two great places to start. There's local community agencies, though, that have great tools, as well. And each of your local communities are going to show things that are, maybe, a little bit more relevant to your local town. The Chamber of Commerce has great tools, your local Chamber of Commerce, and also, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has some great tools for continuity and also for the businesses and different parts of your partners.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. PENN:

Yeah, I agree, those are two great sites. And then, also go to your local and state emergency management sites, because they'll be able to tell you if there are any accidents or any other kinds of events that are happening near your polling places or near the points that you need to get to, and that might help you ward off walking into something that delays what you're trying to do.

DR. KING:

Okay. Election officials, do you have any additional online resources that might be of use?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Merle, I've come across a couple. I think they're private organizations and I think they're more just sort of -- Disaster

Recovery Journal, www.drj.com seem to have a lot of information, as I looked. And there was another called disasterrecoveryworld.com. And I think if you just Google these things you'll find there's all sorts of resources out there. Obviously, FEMA and Red Cross are the best known and the largest administrators of this type of work. But I think there's a lot of industrial type private organizations that assist and consult with industry and private business, and so forth, in helping them develop these plans. So, a good search engine will get you some good results, I think.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I think using that -- if I might add to it -- I think using that what you need to do really is to, like Trevor said, download it and have it in a paper format in case there's no power, because you can't Google, at that point.

But I came across, just like Keith said, several resources where you could order pamphlets that dealt with disaster preparedness and disaster reactions and things like that. But it's nice to have it all printed out, and that would be a good addition to a kit.

MS. McTHOMAS:

The Election…

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Go ahead, I'm sorry.

MS. McTHOMAS:

I was going to say the Election Assistance Commission has a great resource. They have brochures and the contingency planning guideline is very helpful for any election agencies that have not put together a contingency plan. So, it's an excellent resource.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I just wanted to say, you know, having done this since the '90s, and really, not having given this topic any thought, and I think what probably prompted us all, I know you've been around as long as I have, that, in 2004, the threats of a terrorist attack at the Presidential election was what really began getting election officials thinking about this. And I know when I first sat down we were told to begin developing disaster plans and recovery plans. And when I first sat down I was completely overwhelmed with the people and things I had spread all over the county, in your case, the parish, what have you. And I think, you know, we got a lot of stuff out there, and a lot of people out there, in action, on Election Day. And, I think that we've all probably -- I'm glad this conversation is taking place, because I think not only those of us that were around in 2004 have probably slid backwards just a little bit, there has also, in the last number of years, been a tremendous turnover in the elections business, lots of new people since 2004 that have probably heretofore not given this topic much thought. This is a great discussion, and frankly, I'm an election guy, not an emergency planning guy, but I'm feeling pretty smart here because the first two slides on my presentation are, "Know your EMA

director and communicate." And that seems to be the two themes we've got going at the table.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Good. Stan?

MR. STANART:

Well, being on the Gulf Coast, you know, of course, where Houston is a magnet for the hurricanes, and I know like when Ike hit, you know, we had power out anywhere from three to ten days for people, it's important to take advantage of that early voting and push our people to go vote early. And that gives us that opportunity. We have a warning, a hurricane is coming, use the media, you know, drive the people, you know, take -- you know, Election Day is coming. We're going to hold our elections on Election Day. Our voting machines, our batteries will last all day. So, we can run it. We'll have to issue extra flashlights and other kind of type of things, but we will be there. But in early voting, you know, tell people, you know, "Take your opportunity, you know. Go by the grocery store, stock up, and go by and vote on the way home," you know. So let's -- you know using that media to communicate, make it as part of your preparation. Take care of your family, take care of your duties and responsibilities to go vote.

DR. KING:

Okay, good advice. Jeannie had a question that she wanted to pose.

MS. LAYSON:

Actually, this is a question from someone on Twitter. They want to know if anyone here is aware of any additional funding sources for election officials to help prepare for disasters and help develop their contingency plans.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, you know, I don't think -- I'm not aware of any additional funding. especially this kind of a political climate but -- and economic climate. But I think we need to take advantage of the resources that we have. Within the election expense framework, use that framework to do all your emergency planning at little or no additional cost. And while we're together and we're communicating, we should communicate about that facet also.

MR. STANART:

Yeah, the most inexpensive thing you can do is get your staff together, you know, spend a half a day twice a year, just sitting down and discussing what do we do, you know, the "what ifs." That is just so invaluable, that just you start thinking through these processes, and then when the time comes you'll say, "Oh yeah, this is what we did." Of course, if you got that discipline to sit down and write it down and put some flesh to it, I think as Trevor said, keep it at the high level, though, because the reality is when you get down to actually implementing, you got to go and you got to move fast.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

I'm going to go back to knowing your emergency management people. Not only are they the people that understand how to deal with these things, frankly, they're the people that the Federal

Government has been funding over the last number of years. They've got the generators. They've got the mobile command posts. They've got all the tools that you would need to -- and all of the contacts that you would need to manage an emergency or prepare to manage for an emergency. So, I just can't overstate the importance of your emergency management person in your community needs to be your best friend. You need to continually communicate with that person, know that person, have lunch with that person and make sure you've got ongoing communications. Because from that relationship comes direct communications with the law enforcement authorities, you know, first responders, all of the -- those people know things and as the saying goes, they know where the bodies are buried, if you will. Probably not appropriate for this conversation, but they already have all of those communication lines established. So, there's no reason to try to reinvent that. Use those resources to your advantage.

MR. STANART:

Excellent.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

And, on the same note, I recall now that several years ago there were federal grants given to the counties, in my case, the parishes, to develop contingency plans for emergency response. So, I think the wheel has already been invented and built. I think you just have to refer, like Keith said, back to the county administration. They probably have all that in place.

DR. KING:

I would also recommend another resource for any county and that is look what your sister counties are doing because, ultimately, you may be looking to develop a reciprocity agreement for tabulation -- election night tabulation with a sister county. And if they've already developed a plan, you may be able to dovetail with that.

Stan?

MR. STANART:

Example. About a week ago I was down in Galveston, where we had an area what we call "meeting of the minds," election officials in the surrounding ten, 12 counties, and we just get together and kind of discuss these very items.

DR. KING:

Um-hum, yeah this is not the time to take a lot of pride in ownership.

MR. STANART:

Right.

DR. KING:

Whoever you can get the plan from, get it and get it vetted and get moving.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Yeah, knowledge is power, but it's more powerful spread out.

MR. STANART:

Right.

MS. LAYSON:

That's right. And one of the requests that we've had from election officials is to try and provide a platform of knowledge, and contingency planning is one of those subject areas. We have an

election official exchange tool platform on our Website, and one of the areas of expertise is contingency planning. So, I would encourage election officials who may need expertise or who would like to, you know, look at someone else's plan, there are officials there who have signed up to help. And we also have, you know, if you want to sign up, if you're an expert in contingency planning, please, you know, feel free to offer your expertise through that tool.

DR. KING:

Okay. I want to make, also, a comment on something that Keith mentioned, in the context of emergency planning, election continuity planning, recognizing how much institutional knowledge impacts your effectiveness to execute those plans. And, as you pointed out, with the turnover that's occurred in the past ten years, and will occur, always in election administration, recognizing that that institutional knowledge, although extremely valuable, may make you vulnerable if it's not memorialized in some way, so that it can be captured and moved forward with subsequent plans.

Before we take a break, and we're right up against our first break, the first thing I want to do is thank our two presenters, Damon and Trevor. Thank you so much. And I always want to make sure that we're helping the election officials who may be following this on the Webcast or following up post-roundtable through the EAC's Website, about where those next steps are, because this is complicated, and we need to get that inertia broken and moving forward. And I think the important things I heard you say this morning, Damon, was, first know your business, know what the critical success factors are, so that when you have that cup of

coffee with the local emergency official you can succinctly articulate, “Here’s what we need to be able to do regardless.” The second thing that I heard you say that is really important, and I’ll come back when we get to the anecdote parts about, “My center being flooded,” is make sure your plan is disaster neutral, that is, what you’re looking at is not what caused it, but what you need to continue. And then, Trevor, I think your advice about that first call, find out who your local emergency official is and pick up that phone and get that conversation going. And that’s great. I think that’s the kind of thing that the people who are going to benefit from this roundtable are looking to hear, is those first steps.

Jeannie, you had to make a...

MS. LAYSON:

Yes, I would also like to thank both of you for coming, and also say to the viewers, who are on Twitter, that they should definitely follow both the Red Cross and FEMA, especially Administrator Fugate. He really is a great communicator via social media and does a really good job coming across as a genuine governmental official who is working and trying to communicate. So, I would recommend that election officials follow both the Red Cross and FEMA on Twitter for examples of great ways to communicate.

So, thank you very much.

DR. KING:

Thank you. Well let’s adjourn and let’s take about a 20-minute break, and we’ll reconvene right at 11:15. Thank you.

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[The roundtable panel recessed at 10:54 a.m. and reconvened at 11:20 a.m.]

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DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. We are back to the roundtable discussion at the Election Assistance Commission on election contingency planning. Welcome back all the viewers that are following on www.eac.gov. And for those of you that are following on social media and contributing via Twitter, thank you for your contributions. And we'll try to get your questions worked in as we go through the rest of the program today.

Prior to the break we looked at kind of the highest possible level of contingency planning. We looked at what two federal organizations, the American Red Cross and what FEMA are doing. And the purpose of having those gentlemen go first was to kind of give that 10,000 foot view of the big picture of the resources and the strategies that are available at the federal level. And now, we want to do move down to the local level and start looking at the contingency planning from the local election official and the state election official perspective.

And to that end, we have a presentation by Keith Cunningham from the Ohio Secretary of State's Office. And with that, I'll turn it over to you.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Thank you, Merle. Well, I believe as you begin to approach this, the large scale disasters are certainly worthy or our attention. But the fact of the matter is the local election official is, by and large, going to experience much more localized, unanticipated things occurring in their day. And I think the best advice I could give

anyone is to look at your operation through the lens of what can go wrong. For instance, a poll worker has an automobile accident on their ways to polls a little before six in the morning. If you have not reminded the authorities that it is Election Day, they may not think in terms of notifying you that they've got this serious injury accident going on here, in your grip, with supplies that's all over the road or perhaps wet, it's raining, what have you. Have you made a checklist of all the things that are in that grip, so you can quickly prepare another one and recover from this type of an accident?

You know, in terms of -- I think because we're sort of narrowly focused, we think that everybody knows it's Election Day. And I've had situations where somebody has called and said the public works department is digging up the street in front of the poll. And, you know, they didn't think it was Election Day, they had a repair they needed to make. So, this goes to, I think, the principles of dealing with the large catastrophe versus a small are about the same and it's communication, it's working with your partners and making sure everybody is on page.

So let me just, you know, begin with the best advice I can give anyone working elections at the local level is, and we talked about this at the end of the previous session, consult with your local EMA director. You don't know any more about emergency planning than he knows about running an election. So, follow the experts. Work with them. Your local emergency director has all of the resources and all of the tools to help you through whatever type of situation you may encounter. I've actually run polling places hooked up to a fire truck, in the past, where power was lost for the

day and we started out with a small generator running the machine, and then later had to hook the entire building up to the power generator in the back of a fire truck. Something I never would have known how to configure or work out, but the EMA director did it for me, relatively quickly.

The second line -- the second thing that I think is important is just your communications, you know. A complete list of cell phone numbers, your poll landlines, fax lines, e-mail addresses, emergency numbers. And it's interesting because this presentation was developed, Jeannie, I think 2009, was when we talked about this?

MS. LAYSON:

Yes, yes.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

And it's interesting to note that the conversations about Twitter and other types of social media in a presentation that's really only about two-and-a-half years, you know, I did not have included in here because they really weren't factors two-and-a-half years ago that they are now. And it didn't dawn on me until we were talking about this that I probably should have updated this with some of that information. But that's all valuable input that I think we received today.

And then, I think more importantly, is also, with all those numbers, do you have a call tree in place? You can't possibly make every call that you need to make. And I think that you develop sort of a cascading type of communication system where you make five calls, each of those five people make five calls, and

each of those people make five calls, and pretty soon you've cascaded out to the larger community through a call tree.

Plan, plan, plan. Identify what the significant risks are and where -- and think about where the points of failure are. Again, what can go wrong? I can't encourage you enough to think in terms -- look at your organization and think what can go wrong? Where can something fail? And offer the mitigation, where possible, by identifying resources, soliciting the support of others. And also, it's just imperative that you inform your partners. I think the line used by Trevor was, you know, on Election Day, it's too late to start sharing business cards. When a disaster happens, it's too late to plan. Make sure that you have contacted all the people that you'll be partnering with on Election Day. Make sure you've contacted your sheriff, your chief of police. Make sure that you've, you know -- never thought about contacting the public works department until they dug up the street in front of a polling location one day, and suddenly at two in the afternoon, people couldn't get into the polling location.

There's a lot going on in our world and there's a lot of agencies doing a lot of different types of work. And you really need to think about, you know, where do we overlap and who needs to know what I'm doing and what do I need to know about what others are doing on Election Day and, in many cases, the period leading up to an election, which is early voting period, or what have you.

So, I think just trying to get yourself into the thought process of identifying what can go wrong and thinking about that, and then, prioritizing it in a way that you're prepared to manage it when it

happens and you've already had some thought about it, so it doesn't seem like a brand new experience to you when it does occur.

We talked earlier about emergency coordinators. I know the high rise building I work in has an emergency coordinator on every floor. I believe that local election officials should have one or two persons per polling location identified as emergency coordinators, so that, again, you've got this worked out in advance, you're not trying to accomplish your goals on the fly. Clearly, identify the -- who the notifying authority is going to be. In other words, if -- I think this went to the conversation earlier as well. They need to understand who they get directions from and how they respond to those directions. Advise all of the others in the poll that these are your people. And again, this goes back to the conversation earlier of taking care of your people. Some are going to have to stay. Some are going to have to do other things.

I also think it's important that you think about providing identification credentials to these people, because it's very possible and probable that they are going to be transporting some items from that poll either to a identified facility outside of your central election's office, or possibly moving those materials to your central election office. And if there is some type of a disaster where people are not allowed to move freely through the community, or what have you, these identification credentials will assist these individuals in, perhaps, moving effortlessly -- moving the materials effortlessly to where they need to take them.

And train these people very thoroughly and, of course, always provide checklists, because you know depending on what is happening, it's very easy for someone to, as, you know we talked earlier, to think about their family, to wonder about other things. So, provide checklists to help them keep their thoughts focused, to help them keep their attention on the things that they need to keep their attention on as an emergency coordinator.

I have found that there are, basically, two types of emergencies that you're going to have to deal with. One is absolutely catastrophic. There is no chance of resumption. We talked about the tornadoes in Topeka, offline there a minute ago, a catastrophic emergency that there is absolutely no chance to assume -- resume your operation. I think it's important, in that scenario, to prioritize key materials that should be protected or saved. Focus on your mission critical materials. For instance, if you're in a catastrophic situation I think that you're probably going to need to focus on what ballots are already voted. Save and protect those, whereas, if you're in a temporary emergency, you're probably going to want to look at your unvoted ballots, too, because when you go back into business you're going to need those blank ballots to continue voting, so a small example of one of the differences between catastrophic and temporary emergency.

Human safety issues are clearly topic number one in a catastrophic emergency. As I mentioned earlier, it didn't dawn on me until we began to look at this just how many people, all of us, as election administrators, have under our responsibility out in the field on Election Day. Stan, you probably have thousands, you know.

Charlie, you may hundreds. And their safety is important. In a catastrophic emergency, you're going to have a very limited response time. You need to understand that. We established drop-off points and those become very -- if you're working through your emergency management people, those drop-off points quickly became police stations, fire departments and other, you know, first responder type establishments that we could quickly, without having to come all the way to the central election facility, we could at least trust that they were secure locations, and we could drop what supplies we needed to drop off there and move our people on and minimize loss.

In a temporary emergency, I think that you're going to have to first identify the extent of the problem. From your list of solutions, assign what type of solution you may need to assign to that. What is the plan for resuming your activities? Working with our emergency management coordinator in Allen County, Ohio we learned that they had a trailer that was used as a mobile command post in the case of a natural disaster or something like that. And it was he who suggested that that trailer could be staged and ready so that it could be simply hooked up to a truck and taken to a location where perhaps a poll was put out of commission. And while it wouldn't be a desirable situation, the voting equipment could be put in the trailer, we could resume voting for the day with limited resources in that fashion. So, I think it's important in a temporary emergency to think about how are we going to resume our activities.

And again, I think it's important to prioritize the materials to be saved or the materials to be regenerated. And we have to focus on our mission critical materials. You need your poll books. You need your voted ballots. You need your unvoted ballots. Frankly if you can't get the machine out, if you're running an optical scan operation, you could probably leave the machine in the building and as long as you took the ballots out you could resume voting and centrally count them, if you needed to. If it's a DRE operation, then you've got a completely different set of circumstances that you're going to have to deal with. And those are things that I think the planning and the thought process help you work your way through.

Follow your manufacture guidelines for emergency shutdown of equipment. Again, provide checklists. I think we all know that when emergencies strike we, even the best of us that are accustomed to dealing with unexpected difficulties, can get a little rattled. A checklist helps people stay focused. Save your data as best you can, hardware if possible. Secure that data. Create a way that your people can inventory their materials, so that when you call them and you ask them what they have, they can readily tell you what they have. You don't have to go through the list, "Do you have this, do you have that, do you have this, do you have that?" They can tell you, they know what you're looking for, so that you can possibly recreate the materials that you need to get that polling location back in business.

I think it's important that you maintain the appropriate amount of back-up equipment. I think many Boards of Elections, understandably, because of finances, are under resourced in this

area, probably only able to stand minor losses of equipment. Certainly none are positioned to stand a total loss of equipment as you did in Texas. But certainly the ability to withstand a 40 to 50 percent equipment failure or loss is, I think, is a reasonable place to be. It's important you have that equipment staged and ready. Did you test it? All of this equipment should be tested prior to the election. To just pull it off the shelf is not the time to figure out if this is working right or reading ballots right. Have your back-up cards. Have -- again the checklist theme seems to be running consistent throughout this presentation and that is because we do tend to get a little rattled, and I believe strongly that checklists are the things that can keep us focused.

And know where your resources are, you know. And that both is hard resources and personnel resources. Where are your people? Most of us have what we either call rovers or technicians or what have you. Know where they are at all times. Have them -- if you just have them roaming around the county, that's probably not good advice. I always preferred to zone them, and sort of run a zone defense, if you will, so they could, you know, ebb and flow as need be towards the problem. And I don't know what happened here, but the old saying of plan your work and work your plan, I think that's the key to all of this. And it all starts with, again, thinking to yourself, looking at your operation through the lens of what can go wrong. And if you haven't given -- looked at your operation through that lens, then you're probably not going to be prepared. And I certainly suggest that local election officials do just that, because, chances are, the type of disaster you're going to

deal with is a small scale, is an interruption, is not a natural disaster. A couple of Websites we talked about earlier, just in searching the Internet, outside the obvious of FEMA and Red Cross and so forth, a couple of editorial type Websites that can help you with your planning.

That's what I've got.

DR. KING:

Okay, well thank you Keith. I want to follow-up with a couple of questions of some ideas that you introduced in your presentation. And then, I have some other questions I'd like to put to the panel.

In your communication slide, you talked about the importance of understanding all of your communication channels, whether it's through social media, through cell phones, et cetera. And you also talked about having procedures to manage those channels. One of the things that I think every election official is familiar with is that pause before you hit send on the message that you're about to send out whether you've thought through all of the implications of it. Do you have suggestions for election officials about possibly pre-considering messages that will be used in emergency situations, so that once you see them on your screen, it's not the first time that you've looked at it and had it vetted, maybe, by your staff? Could you comment about the content?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think it's good practice to not only have the messages that you are sending out to your colleagues and your workers in your polling locations, but your messages that are preprepared for the media, in many cases, about -- and there are several categories

that we know that these things are going to happen, and they're going to be hardware failures, they're going to be software failures, and they're going to be human failures in the form of an automobile accident, or something like that, that prevents someone from getting to the poll. So, I think that the more prepared you are with the message, fill in the blank type thing, obviously, you don't know where it's going to occur, and you don't know what time of day it's going to occur, and so forth, but to have your message pre-prepared to some degree, is going to save you time and let you concentrate more on solving the problem than trying to communicate.

DR. KING:

Okay. Another idea that you introduced was that the notion of having tiers of emergency coordinators. Certainly, at the county office or at the state office, it would be an expected place, but even designating down to the precinct level, an emergency coordinator for that precinct. As we look at recruiting poll workers, it's a constant process in training poll managers. What kind of attributes would you look for in a poll worker or a poll manager that might indicate a capability to be an emergency coordinator or an interest in an emergency coordinator at a precinct?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think that, first, you have to -- I'm sure all of you have sat in the emergency exit row of an airplane, have heard the flight attendant's dissertation about, "Are you willing to open the door? Are you willing to help others?" And they need an overt verbal response, again, can't just shake your head. So, I think that is a

first -- a good first step. You simply have to ask the person, “Are you prepared to do this?” You know, you may be the one that has to stay here and not return to your home or your family. So, without that willingness, all else, it seems to me, you know, is without regard. So, once you establish that, then I think you have to analyze, as you would in any other situation, are these people that can think clearly under stress? Are they people that can follow directive and follow a schedule of things, take a checklist and work off of it, stay calm under fire, those types of attributes that we would look at in any emergency situation and, you know, assess your people in that. And, you may find that even though they may be willing, that they’re not the people you want to do it. In some cases, they may be all you’ve got, so you’ve got to, as the saying goes, do the best with what you’ve got, where you are at the time. So...

DR. KING:

Okay. And the last question that I wanted to follow-up, and it was actually something that Commissioner Davidson mentioned at break, was about taking advantage of the contacts that you have within your county, with utility management, with road services, et cetera, to communicate that there is an election event about to occur, and to make sure that there’s not conflicting events scheduled within that organization. Is that a part of your checklist for preparing for an election, is, kind of reaching out to typically people that are not on my radar for informing that there’s an election, but as people comment to us all the time, in fact there’s an election today in Georgia, there’s a special election in some 20 counties or so, that we have elections all the time throughout our

jurisdictions. Could you comment about that checklist approach applied to notification to prevent those disasters from happening?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Yeah, and I think you have to look -- again, this goes back to the thought process of what could go wrong? What are all of the elements that can affect your Election Day operation? Perhaps the high school has scheduled something else in the building that day. In fact, I was just discussing with Trevor, before he left, about the -- it never dawned on me that the high school I'm using as a polling location could become an emergency center/shelter for the Red Cross. Well, how does that get managed? And, at least in Ohio, I don't know that there's any authority to call the election office. So, we're probably going to have manage the ongoing, you know, event that we're running, as well as the place becoming a shelter. And, how do we do that? That's something I'll add to the checklist.

But, you know, we tend to -- elections are very important and those of us that are involved in them believe that everybody -- we get very deeply involved in it. We believe that everybody is on page with us. And that's just simply not true. You know, the folks running your electric organization, the electric provider are probably involved in their own things for the day. Or people that are involved in street repair and, you know, those types of things, are very involved in their work. So, it's important to try to think about all the people that have an effect on Election Day. You know, just simply calling your sheriff and reminding him that it's Election Day, him or her, I guess, in some cases, you know. Every shift in law enforcement begins with a daily briefing before the officers go out

to their shift. And simply having your sheriff or the shift commander say, “Oh yeah, and don’t forget, it’s Election Day.” Again, if the poll worker is involved in an automobile accident, they’re probably not going to call you and tell you, “I’ve just been severely injured in an automobile accident.” But, I think if the sheriff’s deputy understands that it is Election Day, they might see the things the poll workers is carrying, and think, perhaps somebody ought to be notified about this. So, it’s no different than our national theme on, “See something, say something.” You just need to make sure as many people are aware of what you’re about, what you’re doing as, you know, you can.

DR. KING:

Okay. In Keith’s presentation, he talked about the importance of the plan, about identifying, first, what needs to happen in the election, and second, what can go wrong, and, third, here’s how we mitigate those things. And I think we’ve heard already about things that have occurred in our jurisdictions, but it seems to me that an important part of that plan is its vitality and keeping its freshness. And so, I’d like to start with Stan, and then move to Shelley, and come back around the table to talk about, in the plans that you have, what things have triggered a revision in your plan that have made you stop and rethink, if not the plan itself, perhaps the planning process? And then, what do you now see as potential triggers that if you’re observing an event or you may read about an event in another jurisdiction that may motivate you to go back, pull your plan off the shelf and review it?

So, if you could, talk about things that have altered your plan, and then, things that have the potential to alter your plan that are now on your radar. We'll start with Stan, and then we'll work down.

MR. STANART:

Like I had mentioned earlier, is this meeting with other elections officials in the general area, like the surrounding counties. We have those on a twice-a-year-basis and those are an excellent opportunity to get -- sit down and kind of, you know, get dirty on what's the reality of running elections, the things that each -- those people have, their challenges of what they've run into. Of course, you know, there's always those statewide Secretary of State conferences where you get, you know, a broader, even bigger knowledge. So, it's important for elections officials to communicate with each other, to share their experiences, the wealth of knowledge that we have out there of people who have been running these elections for, you know, literally decades, you know. Learn from them, share with them, communicate with them. That's how you're going to learn how to do your job better and to deal with situations you've never thought of.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Shelley?

MS. McTHOMAS:

I can think of three factors that have impacted our contingency planning. One, our election office moved to a new location this year, totally different setup, totally different location. We're now in Union Station in Kansas City.

Two, we've had several people to retire. I think Keith or someone mentioned changeover in personnel. And we've had people to retire, or to leave the election agency, and so, that provides an opportunity to update or fine tune your plan.

And then, the third thing is the Joplin tornado, in Joplin, Missouri. That wasn't an Election Day. That tornado -- or those series of tornados came through Kansas City, but it makes you stop and think, hey, what if that had been the weekend before an election? How would we have handled it? Is our plan up-to-date, is it doable? So, those are the three triggering factors for us.

DR. KING:

And…

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Let me throw something in there, something that I don't think anybody has discussed, but I took from your situation in Texas, Stan, is, should we be storing all of our voting equipment in the same place? I've not had that discussion with anyone, but...

MR. STANART:

Budgets -- budgets are the problem. Now, in our situation we did not have sprinklers throughout the building, and we did not have, you know, a separation firewall. Our new building, we'll have fully sprinkled, and we'll have a firewall where we're purposely putting, you know, half our equipment on one side of the firewall and half on the other. But to have multiple locations, now you start getting into dollars to be able to support staff at multiple locations, and that's a consideration that's not always available.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

The firewall is a very good idea.

MR. STANART:

Yeah.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

I mean, obviously, partition the equipment in a way that you don't lose it all at one time.

MR. STANART:

Exactly right, yeah.

DR. KING:

Shelley, if I could go back and ask a follow-on question, in the part of the country I live, tornados are very common, and the disaster is often highly localized, but highly spectacular. In terms of learning from the Joplin experience, was there an effort, or are you aware of an effort, that made that learning intentional, that the folks in the Joplin area worked to help document its potential impact on the elections office? And, that's really -- I think what I'm hearing, is, we can learn a lot from our colleagues, but only if it's documented and shared. And so, my question was, was it something that was pushed out? Or did you pull out the experience from the Joplin?

MS. McTHOMAS:

I'm not aware of anything being pushed out. Our state County Clerk and election officials' meeting will begin tomorrow, and that will give us a good opportunity to talk with our Joplin counterparts and maybe learn from their experience.

DR. KING:

Okay. You mentioned one other thing that I think is really important to stress. All of us who work in election offices, we're often housed

in hand-me-down buildings; we're in the annexes, we're in the old courthouse, in the old jail, et cetera.

MR. STANART:

Exactly.

DR. KING:

And when we finally get an opportunity to move to a different facility, it's a -- it may be a once-in-a-lifetime event, everybody's excited, everybody begins to envision the new offices, et cetera. But you raise a point that I think is very important, is that your existing disaster recovery and contingency plan is predicated on your old location; on your -- on perhaps the transportation model that's there, on the communication infrastructure that's there, and moving to that new facility does not always trigger the review of that plan. And so, I commend you for pointing that out. I think that's an important point.

Charlie, what about...

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, you talked about refreshing our plants. When you look at it, really there's only -- not only, but probably, the two main ways that our plans get refreshed is, number one, a disaster happens and after that we're all in a frenzy to develop our plans to make sure it doesn't happen again. But then, the other way, and I think this is part of it, anytime we communicate or talk about disaster preparedness, about disasters that may have befell some of our cohorts, then, that spurs us to refresh our plans, too. So, maybe what we should do is concentrate on the communications part before we have -- we're forced to refresh those plans.

DR. KING:

Okay. Ed, from the vendor's perspective, I'll pose the question, what triggers a review of your plans? And what kind of environmental scanning do you all do, in terms of collecting these experiences around the country with your customers or perhaps other customers, that gets folded back into your plan?

MR. SMITH:

Sure, the -- you know, what I'm hearing are two things that I know are true about when you refresh. One is periodic. So, you say, okay, every year, every six months we're going to look at the plan. The other is event driven; somebody moved, we had a disaster, something changed, we have redundant servers, now, so things are different, the IT department is no longer supporting us, or they've started supporting us, what not.

The one thing I haven't heard, though, and I think it's very important is test driven. If you write a plan, no matter whether it's 12 sections and 500 pages, or whether it is a short, more efficient plan, if you don't test it, when you have a disaster you'll kick yourself and you wish you had tested it. So then, after your test, learning and understanding what went well and what went poorly, and then modifying your plan accordingly is very important, as well. And then, taking the larger view that you asked about, Merle, yes, looking at what other people have done, what other people have experienced, putting yourself in their shoes, mirroring that through your equipment base, your deployment base where your own people are, service operations people, and then, saying, "Okay, well, we should deploy differently, we should do this differently, we

should show up a little early, we should ship these goods here, we should reconsider how we warehouse spare parts for our customers." There are a number of things that go through your mind, and that then relate to, and become action items, when there is a disaster like that.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

You know, as I sit here and think about it, not only storing all of your equipment in one location, I'm sure many boards load all of their equipment into one big truck and send it out for delivery, which makes it all vulnerable to an automobile accident. So, you know, should we review whether or not that should be done in smaller increments? I know it's not quite as efficient, but those are all thoughts that have occurred, just in this conversation, to me.

DR. KING:

One of the things that we've talked about, in terms of planning, is the need to communicate with our community partners, the sheriff's department, emergency response groups. In terms of your emergency plan that you have or that you're visualizing or that you're going to revise when you get back to the office, where that plan is, what are your dependencies? I think one of the things that many election officials understand we try to do, is to tightly control this very complex process that we're responsible for, and we're often reluctant to release control, particularly on highly visible things, to our partners. But to what extent, and I'd like to start, Stan, with you, is your response dependent upon the vendor's

engagement? And when I say “the vendor,” of course it’s typically not a single vendor, it can be multiple vendors. But, if you could, comment on the dependencies that exist within your plan and whether there is a symmetry in that responsibility, whether the people upon whom you’re dependent recognize that there is, in fact, a dependency and an obligation to aid you in disasters.

MR. STANART:

It’s multiple tiered, okay? I think the first one was, you know, when we had that total loss of equipment, our vendor, Hart, was critical to our success of pulling off the election. I mean, we could not have gotten the equipment, the DRE voting machines, that we needed, in the volumes that we need, without their help. In addition, though, we’re so large, the third largest county in the United States, larger than 24 states. We needed so much equipment, also, we had to have the support of our sister counties in Texas, and as far away as Colorado, in fact, supplying us with loaner equipment, whether that be the DRE voting machines, the eSlates, a voting booth. You know, you think about it, you know, when you need as many voting booths as we needed, with 736 polling locations last November, that’s a lot of booths, okay?

And also, we did provide a back-up of having paper available, which we normally not do -- have available for early voting or Election Day, you know. We, you know, we then had to have cans to put the paper ballots in, okay? Well, that took -- you know San Antonio came to the plate. They had a bunch of them they no longer used, but thank goodness they had them in storage and available to us.

So, when you have a disaster of a magnitude like that, you're dependent upon others to be successful. And, if you don't have that, you're up a creek. But thankfully, we have such a willingness of others who, you know, who consider us and think about us. It's amazing the goodwill that we received when our disaster happened.

DR. KING:

Was that dependency fully known before the event? Or is it something that you discovered as you moved forward?

MR. STANART:

Yeah, we discovered it because it's a natural thing, because everybody out there thinks thank goodness it wasn't me. So, there's that tendency to, you know, want to be helpful, because they realize one day they might needing to be on the receiving end of it. In fact, we've actually, at our last meeting of the minds, we've requested our Secretary of State to actually, you know, push down to the counties a document that would give -- that all of our clerks and elections administrators could ask their Commissioners Court to pre-approve giving them the authority to go ahead and share it. Because one of the things we saw is that we had to go through their courts to be able to get their equipment. Even though they were willing to give it to us, they had to ask for permission and it kind of put a little bit of a delay in it. So, we're trying to remove that delay. I mean, we had 67 days to pull it off. We pulled it off, but what happens if that had been 60 days, 55 days, you know? Every little day, then, would get so critical, every time. So, we're trying to

put processes in place for the whole State of Texas that will allow instant help when it's needed.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Shelley, any observations on the dependencies that your plan has with partners, particularly vendors?

MS. McTHOMAS:

There are many dependencies, and I'm not sure if the plan reflects that. But just listening to this discussion today, I'm -- our equipment is picked up and delivered in several stages over the course of three to four days. So, we're very dependent on that company and their employees. Our printer is very much, on Election Day, available to us, in case we need extra ballots or something goes wrong. And, to his credit, he always says, "I'm on call for you today." And he literally is, on Election Day. Equipment manufacturers, now, because we're in Union Station, which is this vast, humongous facility, we're very much dependent on making sure that they know when we're having pick-up and delivery of equipment, so the docks are clear, or so they don't turn off the security, because we're in there at four or five in the morning, that kind of thing.

And then, I think of the dependency, in terms of an emergency, maintaining the integrity of an election. Keith mentioned, or someone mentioned, using fire/police stations as a place to deliver your supplies, or the memory cards, or the ballots. And, from a public perspective, that would help maintain the integrity of the vote, because people would feel that, okay, everything is safe, my ballot is at a police department, or my ballot

is at a fire department. So, I think, you think in those terms, too, in terms of dependencies and making decisions what, from a public perspective, is going to in this kind of chaotic or emergency situation cause voters to feel that we really are on top of our game and we are maintaining that integrity of their ballot.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, just to follow-up on that a little bit, when I think we go out to establish those types of relationships it's important that we do it in a way that we understand our dependency on them, and that we approach it in that way, and we don't approach it in a sense that, you know, we're trying to tell you, you know, it's Election Day and this is the most important thing in the world. I think we recruit those relationships through common denominators, which is, you know, our democracy and the need that we have to be as transparent as we can be, and show that security measures are in place, and so forth.

So, I think when we reach out to try to establish those partners, doing it with that type of an approach, generally results in, you know, the guys at the fire department saying, "Well, yeah, we got a room back here we can lock that stuff in," or the folks at the police at the substation having a closet or somewhere, that at least we can say the materials were locked up in, as opposed to trying to go out and run the situation. I think going out, you know, with an open hand and recruiting those people to help us. I don't think that in the past those external players have really ever been actively

recruited and brought into the process and told, “Yes, you’re an important part of this, too. We need your help to make this work properly.” So, that’s I think is a good thing that’s coming out of this discussion.

DR. KING:

Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

As far as the dependencies, like Stan talked about, his dependencies that he depended on were his fellow election officials throughout the state...

MR. STANART:

Yep.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

...to help him to replace and to deliver his voting machines on time. And I think it goes to show you what a unique bunch of people election officials are, because, as Keith mentioned, the process that we’re involved in is more than just administration. It goes back to the founding principles of our country, which is based on free elections. And I think everybody no matter how hardened or how blasé they are about their job, still in their core beliefs, that they have an important function, in regard to the running of our country.

And, secondly, the dependencies that we have, locally, such as fire departments, police departments, utility companies, and things like that, our plan has a part in it that says, well, these are the phone numbers for the sheriff, these are the phone numbers for the chief of police, of the communities, and these people are going to be on call, and the vendors -- not the vendors necessarily,

because they're so far away, their plants and their representatives, but the technicians that take care of the actual machines, and the warehouses, that's the dependencies that are immediate. And again, like Stan said, the other dependencies are our coworkers throughout the state. And, as Shelley said, there should be some sort of a communication from the state to make sure that we, at least, keep those in mind, and we have a network to be able to contact them.

DR. KING:

Okay. Ed, from the vendor's perspective.

MR. SMITH:

Gosh, one of the things that comes to mind listening to the conversation around the table is you kind of have to pick and choose which dependencies you're going to address, you know. The JBC and the eSlate for instance have tantalum capacitors in them, and tantalum is mined, generally speaking, in central Africa. So, you know, if you wanted to run out all your dependencies, that would be one path of dependencies that you have manufacturers...

[Laughter]

MR. SMITH:

...and, you know, there's somebody literally digging tantalum out of the ground in central Africa that go into those products. So, I think -- and then, it's built on a little bit of what you just said Charlie, you kind of have to pick and choose and work with the people who are local, deal with the dependencies you can deal with it. And another thing that came out of earlier today's discussion is let experts deal with the dependencies that they can deal with, your emergency

managers, for instance. So, have the relationships in place, deal with the dependencies that on your horizon, and that you can control in your four walls and, you know, write a plan, test a plan, and let it fly.

DR. KING:

Okay, I'm going to ask a question in just a moment, and I'm going to start with Ed, and work back around this way, and it's really about what do your response teams look like? How do you assign people to them? How do you choose them? How do you prioritize their work?

But, before I do that, and that will give you a moment to gather your thoughts, I want to comment on an anecdote that was relayed to me out of the Katrina disaster, that it was one of those "aha" moments for me, where I just stopped and realized how small in scope my vision of disaster planning could be. And the issue was, how do you redirect voters to new polling places if their old polling place no longer exists, and there's no newspapers, and there's no television, and there's no radio, and there's no cell phone coverage? And the obvious answer is, you go old school and you go to a printer and you get signs made up. And that's when the person said the nearest printer that was still in business was 150 miles inland. And I think, Stan, you pointed out, the importance of redundancy in our plans. And even identifying the dependency on a local printer, which would normally be our preference to get signs made up, the reality is, that the disaster may be so widespread that our ability to go to our tried and true partners doesn't exist anymore.

And that was my takeaway moment out of the Katrina disaster, where I really thought I've got to step back and better understand, as you pointed out, Keith, what can go wrong. And it was a much larger step than I had envisioned.

So…

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

That's frightening.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

You get a lot of mark-a-lots and you pass them out. And actually, that's what happened in a lot of those precincts, too. They made their own signs up.

DR. KING:

Well, and the volunteers become important.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Yeah, yeah.

DR. KING:

Let's go to this question about, what does a response team look like? You know, they have different names. We have a response team at my center, that they carry kits, and those kits enable them to provide emergency support, on election night, for the recovery of memory cards, or to rebuild a database if necessary, those kinds of things. And they're charged and they're deployed, but in reality, their mission is constantly changing, as things change within the voting system. But from your perspective, if you have a response team, or you're considering the development of a response team in your jurisdiction, what does that look like? What goes into the

selection of those people, Ed, the training of those people and the deployment of those people?

MR. SMITH:

Well, the vendors have field people deployed across the country. And I'll use the Katrina as an example. So, Louisiana is filled with Sequoia brand equipment, and talking to individuals who were actually involved in the response, they basically, as soon as the way was clear that they could physically get to where they needed to go, they pulled parts as best they could from the warehouses, they loaded up their own cars and pick-up trucks, and they went. So, in terms of selection, at that point selection and stuff, kind of goes out the window. The salespeople, the field operations people, they're already in some ways self-selected, because that's the job that they're doing, is field operations, equipment maintenance, and such. And they just went. And they triaged the equipment, did what needed to be done, and ultimately, restored those jurisdictions back to service over a period of time. So, that's kind of the catastrophic response.

The preplanned, maybe not so catastrophic responses that, once again, you have field people, they're geographically dispersed and, you know, like any business, we're going to geographically disperse people where the work is, so that helps. They have a little bit of self-selection there, too, in terms of geography. And you place people who have training, who have the skills, who have been through the courses, and in many cases, certified, whether that be by the manufacturer or some other entity, to do the work, are there, or near there already. There's also how you strategically

set up your parts depots, and your RMA, returned material authorization, your returned goods. Your machine doesn't work, so you send it back to a repair depot. You know the vendors know what are the top -- we'll go back to the top ten -- the top ten parts that are going to tend to need replacements in equipment. There's inventory of equipment for units out in the field that are simply destroyed, whether that be fire, whether that be someone leaving a window open and the units got rained on, or into, or flood, and so, that we can help to some degree, certainly not to that extent, but at least, to some degree, to replace those products and keep things moving.

So, I'm not sure that's a full answer to your question, but that's just some initial thoughts. One thing, reflecting over to the jurisdiction side, you know, we've kind of talked today, and listening to the number of registered voters and citizens' numbers in these jurisdictions represented here today, these are medium to large jurisdictions. I think there is a really -- there's a deeper problem that we probably have not addressed here, today, where you have a number of smaller counties, they may be very rural counties, they, certainly, may be very sparsely populated large geographic size counties, especially in the western half of the United States, and they have one County Clerk, and a half a guy who splits his or her time between the IT department, or some other department, in the county, in helping out with elections. And that is a pretty significant number of counties in this country, a significant percentage of the counties. Maybe not the population of the country, but out of the roughly 33 or some odd hundred counties in

this country, I would suspect the counties of that smaller size, population-wise are a pretty significant percentage of the number of counties. And so, what do those folks do when you have five eSlates or five Edges or five Ivotronics or three scanners, and what not? Those folks have the same problems, you just have fewer zeros behind the numbers. And they have far fewer resources to deal with these problems, too. So, we should bear in mind that in some cases, you know, rovers and technicians and teams and spare equipment and what not, may not be the norm, but they're still susceptible to power going out, public works tearing up the street, cell phone communications being cut off or poor signal quality, just as the larger counties are.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, in regard to teams and responses, most of the people we depend on, for, say, emergency response, would be the people that are already in place outside of our office, for instance, the sheriff's department, the local police departments. In my parish, in my jurisdiction, we have 11 municipalities, which is kind of unusual for Louisiana. But, each one of those has a chief of police, so we have them on call every election. So, any response that we need to have at the precinct level is pretty quick. And then, we have the Secretary of State's technicians at our voting machine warehouse, which, each parish has one. They are on call, also, and they have eight police officers stationed with them, so if they have to go

anywhere in the parish, they can get there pretty quick. So, that's, I guess, the local response team.

Within my office, we have a team that travels around to the precincts that day delivering supplemental poll lists, and such as that. And they're always available to go to the immediate aid of a precinct. Our parish is probably not -- is not nearly as populated as Stan's, but it has a very large land area. So, we have to be pretty mobile and ready to go out, throughout the communities.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

And one other thing I'd like to comment on. Sequoia, at least, which is now Dominion, on their response to the disaster of Katrina, it was a pretty remarkable thing that they were able to get the equipment down there to satisfy all the needs, to equip all the polling places. And, I can recall a picture that I saw, of our Secretary of State driving one of the delivery trucks. So, it was a pretty -- it was a coordinated effort. It seemed like chaos at first, but they refreshed it pretty quick.

DR. KING:

Very good, thank you. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think from a standpoint of structure of building -- and to go to Ed's point, I don't think any local jurisdiction is exempt from this, perhaps their funding authority, or so forth, think they are, but, you know, a disaster can strike anywhere at any time, or problems can strike anywhere at any time. But I think you have to look at the

traditional sort of pyramid with all of your poll workers and field people at the bottom of the pyramid, up to your rovers or technicians, or whatever you want to call them, and then, up to your sort of, you know, next level of management, and then, ultimately, up to yourself and the senior management at the top. And information flows in both directions, you know, up and down that pyramidal structure.

I think that, as far as people, there are some guidelines you can use. There are those among us that have worked in environments where this type of training has been readily provided. For instance, school teachers are pretty well trained in how to deal and how to manage disasters. So, as you look through your ranks of workers, you know, you begin to look for, has anybody been a school teacher. Plant workers, particularly managers and so forth, out of manufacturing facilities, all have very extensive emergency management procedures in place, either voluntarily or by demand. Again, I think it's a case of identifying who the people that you've got around you are, what their skill sets consist of, and trying to recruit folks from those, you know, retired fire fighters would make great emergency management coordinators for Election Day, retired police officers, again, retired school teachers, retired, you know -- maybe not even retired. Perhaps they can be existing and just not working that day. But, I think as you begin to develop your key players in this pyramidal emergency response team, understanding their backgrounds, and trying -- and you may have to just actively go out and recruit certain types of people that you want in those positions.

And then, the key to it all is just, stay as flexible as you can possibly stay, because it's going to change.

DR. KING:

All right, Shelley, and then Stan, attributes of your response teams.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Well, I'd like to answer that with the new model that I want to put in place. This is a good group to kind of run it by, and that is to organize it in a two-pronged central office, and then the field team, and within each of those, three elements, the response team for the central office there would be someone or someone's responsible for the security of the voting materials, for staff and personnel issues, making sure staff and personnel are safe, and then, the IT issues, in terms of tabulation and getting results out. And the same thing for the field team, we have the roving deputies, as most of us do. You've got all these people in the field. You want to make sure you have a system in place for getting the materials safe; the ballots or the memory cards, the equipment, getting that where it should go, and then, for personnel, or any voters who might be in the facility. So, that's kind of the model that I've been thinking about that we want to put in place for this next stage of our contingency planning before we go into 2012.

And then, also, we have a phone tree in place. I always think of, the night before an election, do we have things in place if something should happen, like a tornado the night before. So, we have a phone tree that we'd be able to implement. But something, you know, more major, what would that response team look like, because everything is out there in place, we have people who open

up our polls, sometimes it's the janitor or the church pastor. And so, that, probably needs a little bit -- a bit more tweaking. But that's what it is.

DR. KING:

All right very good, thank you. Stan?

MR. STANART:

Yeah, like everybody else we have, you know, the field technicians who handle six or seven polling locations. And then, of course, back in our main office, then we have, you know, our next level of expertise of, you know, well trained. You've got to have people who know -- the technicians, they got to know the equipment, they got to know the situation, they got to be able to respond and fix, quickly repair the issues at the polling place, and then, of course, the back-up back at the main warehouse. Just like, you know, Keith said, flexible, you know. There's always a new situation that never occurred, so you've got to be able to quickly react and deal with those types of situations and, you know, just give the most positive experience to our voters. That's who we serve and that's what we have to do. But, you've got to have them well trained, across the board.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Stan. We've got a question that's come in from a viewer.

MS. LAYSON:

We do, we have a question via Twitter, for the whole panel. How much contingency planning should emphasize catastrophes versus likely or every-day emergencies?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, this is like running an emergency room. I think you have to, as you do this, you have to also assess the probability of it occurring. Clearly, in a May primary, in the Midwest, there's a chance for tornados, there's a chance for flooding, but there's probably not a chance for an ice storm. In November, there may be, in March there may be. There is always an opportunity for automobile accidents to occur, for unexpected things to, you know, for power failures, for phone system failures. The likelihood your phone system is going to fail is much greater than the likelihood you're going to experience a weather catastrophe. So, I think that as you plan for things, you have to anticipate the likelihood that they're going to occur and deal with them in that fashion.

MS. McTHOMAS:

I think you a have to always go for the worst case scenario, and then, balance it from there, because in the world that we live in today, certainly there can be the worst case scenario, as witnessed by 9/11. So it's important to have at least something in place for all of these, the local emergencies and the catastrophic ones, too.

DR. KING:

Okay, Stan?

MR. STANART:

The normal things most of the people who've had experience doing this, they know how to deal with the normal things. What you have to do, though, is train the new people. There's always new people coming in. Train them on the normal things, so they know how to

deal with it. And then, the catastrophic things, that's where your leadership team has to sit down, take that time and go through those "what ifs," because, you know, it don't happen very often. It might not be in a decade, it might not be in 20 years. But when it comes, you'll appreciate it, if you sit down and talked it through and done some high-level planning of some sort, because it will be something new. You can deal with those everyday things, those things that you've never seen before, you know. If you haven't thought it through, it's going to take you by surprise.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. SMITH:

And Merle, maybe two procedures or sets of procedures makes sense, because the every -- the minor everyday things on Election Day are just that, they're minor everyday things; nobody is there to open the polling place, public works has the street torn up in front of it. Those should be in some other procedure than your disaster recovery plan, in my opinion because, one, you just inflate your disaster recovery plan to where it's not as useful. And second, as Stan just said, people just should be able to handle it. And I know, in jurisdictions, you know, that time from five in the morning to eight in the morning that the primary goal in life is to get every polling place open, but there are some fairly standard procedures. You have a white board that has all the precincts that are not open. You may have another white board that describes where your back-up staff are, your back-up poll workers and election judges are, where your back-up rovers, equipment is geographically dispersed, so that

you can bring those resources to bear to get the polling places open. That's, I think, something separate, than, we had a fire in the warehouse or we had a flood or what not.

DR. KING:

Um-hum, Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I think the only thing I can add to that is, you have a contingency plan for a disaster, but then the difference is going to be in the communication in how far up the chain it needs to go and how, you know, according to the severity of the problem. So, the contingency plan, naturally, has all these resources in it, but you're not going to use them all. And I think, like I said, communication within your organization up and down your chain of command is what makes a difference.

DR. KING:

Yeah, I think I heard a couple of things, and I'm going to take the last word before we break for lunch, and it's consistent with what we heard this morning from FEMA and American Red Cross, which is, the leadership role is different. I think, Ed, your description of the street under construction, as irritating as those events are, that really is, business as usual, on Election Day. And I think the purpose of the disaster plan is to clearly communicate to everybody, "This is not business as usual," and that's leadership's responsibility within the jurisdiction.

It is time for our break. This is the lunch break and we're going to take one hour, return here at 1:30. And for those of you

that are following us on www.eac.gov, we will be back right at 1:30, thank you.

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[The roundtable panel recessed for lunch at 12:28 p.m. and reconvened at 1:31 p.m.]

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DR. KING:

All right, well welcome back. We're going to reconvene our roundtable on contingency planning for elections. And to start off this afternoon we are moving further down to the level of detail that occurs at the county level. And to start our presentations this afternoon, from St. Landry Parish, we've got Charlie Jagneaux, right, who's going to describe some of their experiences and then we're going to use that as a basis for our discussion.

So, Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, thank you. This presentation arose out of some work I did with the Orleans Parish Clerk of Court, Ms. Dale Atkins, down in New Orleans, right after Katrina. And I'll have to explain one of the problems with the Katrina disaster was that there was so much disruption in utility services, and a whole array of public functions, so they were not able to get back into the city in a short amount of time. As a matter of fact, their staff was displaced throughout part -- throughout most of the country, because of the evacuation, and that hindered, I guess, remediation efforts at the same time. And this presentation deals with the preparedness part of it, which includes contingency plans.

The first couple of pictures show you some of the work that we did and some of the condition of the records. You would never think that your record room would turn out looking like this. I mean, some of the damage to the records and the open files was from a flood in, I guess, a major part of the City of New Orleans that was considered safe for 50 or 60 years. However, there was enough water there to put a foot of water in that building. On the right are those boxes you see were in a warehouse building that was on the second floor. These were on the second floor and the flood didn't reach them, but the roof was torn off. So, I imagine this would apply to disasters such as tornados, wind storms, and such as that. So that, even in this one disaster, there were several different factors at play.

And, as a matter, this -- the upper right of these boxes, it was an interesting scenario, because, and I'll just kind of give you a little idea of what the preparedness part of it was. These are what we call -- or I used to call chicken boxes, you know, the chicken boxes that you receive from -- they ship frozen chicken, frozen seafood and other perishables, because they're wax coated. So, what happened there were 10,000 boxes of records, and legal size sheets fit perfectly in these boxes. But since they were wax coated from the beginning, only about three -- maybe two-and-a-half to three percent of the boxes had records in them that were damaged, even though they stayed there for about four months after Katrina, a lot of it was due to condensation. And had remediation taken place immediately, then probably, the amount of damaged records would have been down to, say, a half percent. But don't forget

chicken boxes. That's a pretty handy thing. It's just one of the simple things such as that, and sheets of plastic.

This is a cycle that I've noticed in most of the presentations I've seen on disaster preparedness and contingency plans. The first thing out of all of this is to avoid the disaster. And you can do that in several ways. First of all, you have to evaluate, and we talked about that this morning too, evaluate and identify your risks. Does it come from a geographic location, such as, someone living on the East Coast, well the West Coast, too, Gulf of Mexico, near a fault line, such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Kansas, with tornados, same thing. And even in the next category, you have to study your building characteristics. And like in Stan's case, he had a building that caught fire. And I noticed that he mentioned that part of the building didn't have a sprinkler system. That probably didn't help at all, did it? So, you have to look at geographic location, your physical plant, your building characteristics, whether it's an old building, whether it's on the ground floor, top floor, condition of the building; windows, roofs, fire systems, alarm systems, fire alarms for example.

And then, after you've done that, or while you're doing that, your policies and procedures, like Keith talked about. You have to have policies in place that will, first of all, avoid the catastrophe, and then, procedures that continue to reinforce that, all along, so you don't just forget about it once you've done one check. Your procedures should be to review it every, say, six months, or at least once a year. And after that's done, after that first evaluation, you should upgrade your physical facility and procedures. Now, the

physical facility, like we talked about with budget constraints, that's kind of tough, but there's still some simple things you can do. For instance, if you know you have a leaky building, for instance, in your upstairs, put plastic sheeting over your files. If you have the opportunity to store them in these waterproof boxes, do that. Make -- you know, check and make sure that your sprinkler system works. And, like I said, if you have the sheeting in place and the waterproof boxes, then you can have a fire and your records won't be appreciably damaged. And your procedures, also, go right along with that. Okay, let's see, and then, you make changes that will protect your office from, number one, environmental effects such as hurricanes, tornados, landslides, flooding. And when I made this presentation, I didn't think of the more common problems of fires and, say, electrical outages and things like that. But you make those changes with these things in mind.

The manmade dangers, here you go Stan, fire, hazardous material from train derailments, and that might affect your operation in two ways. It might prevent your staff from showing up to conduct an election, if that hazardous material causes and evacuation of the area, and it may damage your building also, damage your records. Plant mishaps, if you're located in an industrial area, such as Baton Rouge, Louisiana, has got a lot of petro chemical plants, you have to make -- take that into consideration. If possible, the best thing is to move. But again, but constraints usually prevent that. Highway chemical spills, if you're next to a major highway, if there's a highway closure, again your staff can't get there. Vandalism and criminal intrusion, I know some people were concerned about

criminal intrusion as far as the election process goes. As always we talk about terrorism, but to me, one of the aspects of terrorism that hasn't been addressed would be someone trying to disrupt our elections. And in a small jurisdiction like mine, it wouldn't make much difference, but in, say, Stan's jurisdiction, covering hundreds of thousands of people, that would be quite catastrophic.

Then, you make up your plan. You plan for your disaster. Number one, it must be written. I think everybody knows what they would do, but it's being able to communicate it to your staff, down the hierarchy of command to other people, to other stakeholders, so to speak. So, you've got to have it written. And I've found that, and I think most people agree, one person has to be in charge, and assisted by a committee. If you get a committee to try to create a disaster plan without some sort of direction, and Stan is smiling about that, you may have had experience with that too, and you can address that, then, it usually is like a committee, it bogs down and it goes very slow.

Number three, you should have a definite timetable and definite scope and goals for the plan. If you don't have a timetable, unfortunately, things go by the wayside and they're forgotten. They're not concentrated on as much. And it doesn't take long, so that you shouldn't have a problem setting a definite timetable. And your scope and your goals, that's why that one person that's in charge of it should give them the parameters that they're going to deal with that is supposed to remain in, or you'll have a contingency plan that's just unworkable and unwieldy. Then, after it's completed, it should be reviewed by the highest level of

management, whether that person is the person who originated the plan or not.

And I'm interjecting here. There was a question that I saw on our literature that we received, talking about collaboration. And collaboration, to me, just doesn't happen by itself, it happens because someone is motivated. Usually the motivation comes from someone realizing, hey, if something happens, I'm the one that's going to get blamed. So, that's -- that might be good motivation. I think it is, because that person has a stake in determining the outcome of any disaster in its jurisdiction.

And the elements of your overall plan, well, number one, do you have a plan of action, in case or in the event of a disaster? Do you have a definite plan to say, well, who's in charge of this, and what's -- what is the -- what are the steps we're going to go through to implement this plan.

Record protection plan and procedures, oftentimes, we, in other fields, or even in the voting field, we are concerned about our equipment. But Keith talked about records; the voting records, the unvoted ballots, the voted ballots making sure that all of that was secure. So, you need to make sure that your records probably have a separate plan and a separate set of procedures, because it's not quite the same as equipment and machinery. You should have a continuation of operation plan, or a COP as it's known.

All of these plans, and I think we learned this morning that the most important element, and I'm sorry I left it out, was the plan to protect your staff and to take care of them and to reassure them and to get them back into the -- on the playing field, as soon as

possible. I think that would be a function of a communication you have with them.

A list of the priorities, Keith, again, said, “Make a checklist, make a checklist, make a checklist.” And that list of priorities would be the checklist. Now, after that, and I think this is one of the failings we have, not only on the local level, but probably, state and federal too, is to make sure that everyone knows the plan, including your governing authority, in my case, parishes, counties, and the state, and regions, and also including the fire department, and police department, and emergency personnel, all the first responders, too.

Then you -- after you’ve made and got all your plans in place, and your list made, you prepare for your disaster by assigning specific emergency duties to certain personnel. And we talked about that this morning, too. And you can probably judge, if you’ve administered an office for sometime, or you’re familiar with your personnel, you have a pretty good idea who can handle certain levels of emergency. And you assign these people to those duties. And again, give them checklists and make sure that everybody knows who’s in charge of what, as far as the chain of command goes.

List your contact information for personnel. This is -- has come to me this morning -- or came to me this morning, that this is probably one of the most important things about it, because, like someone said, and like my experience was in New Orleans after Katrina, the staff was dispersed all over the place and nobody could get in touch with three quarters of the staff. It took six months for

that clerk -- she had a normal operating staff of about 250 people. After the hurricane, she had 18 or 20, maybe 25 people that showed up. That was IT. That was it. She had to move her office with those few people and within -- it took, I think, three to six months to get it up to 85 people. And it's unbelievable. But, of course, this was a different -- the level of this catastrophe was a lot more extreme than most that we'll encounter, hopefully.

But, that list of contact information is good for two things. It will get your staff in communication with the office, and let them know what's going on, what's expected, and hopefully, that they'll be able to return. And you mentioned it this morning that the biggest thing is to let their families be reassured as far as where they are, where they're located, and their safety concerns.

After that, list the priorities for salvaging of records. In my business, I'm a County Clerk, which encompasses the job of land record retention and Court records also, so my focus is mostly on records. So, records are very important, because of lot of them are perishable. We have two forms, you know, paper, which, a lot of us still have a bunch of, and digital records. So, you have to make your list of priorities in order to preserve both of those. Like Stan said, and mine is the same way, we store them offsite, the digital records. Some of the older records we have are also stored offsite, but in a disaster of any magnitude, they will probably be in danger, also. So, back-ups and offsite storage and protection of your physical paper records is very important, plus the hardware that it's stored on.

And then again, appropriate agencies need to know where they are, what form they are in, in case someone comes in with a fire hose and starts blasting all your papers all over the place. They need to know to be careful in certain areas of your office.

And Stan is a good example of this, too. We talked about updating your insurance policies. Most of us, at least in my case, I depend on my county, on my parish, as far as insurance is concerned, because they provide all of my infrastructure. However, if that is gone, or they've neglected to have insurance on that equipment, it would present a problem financially, especially, but in the modern time, it would take to replace all of that stuff. And I think Stan will probably reiterate the importance of that insurance policy when it comes to -- especially when he had to replace all of his equipment.

Again, upgrade your facilities; smoke detectors, water detectors. Get your records off the floor because a minor fire can involve four to six inches of water on the floor, because the mantra of fire departments is water, water, water. And you don't have any control over that. So, the best protection for that would be just a simple elevation of the records. Put them on pallets or something like that, and, again, the chicken boxes. I mean, it's pretty simple, but it works. Regular maintenance of climate control systems, because how many times have you noticed -- I mean, in my house, last month I walked in and had a puddle of water on the floor. And my air conditioning is in the attic, it was leaking. So, who's to say that that won't happen in a record room? That would be catastrophic, because, often, those things aren't detected for

months. But a regular maintenance of those climate control systems, you know, and also, probably prevent fires.

Arrange for auxiliary power sources. We have a generator that automatically starts anytime the power is cut off. And I imagine most of us have that nowadays, especially if we've been through any kind of an emergency. Waterproof record boxes. Raise your records off the floor. Two simple, simple inexpensive things; didn't cost hardly anything.

Offsite storage, as far as physical records, paper, it can be expensive. But -- I was almost forced to do it because we didn't have room, but still, it's an expense. However, offsite storage of digital records is equally important, and probably more so, because those digital records are more recent and probably pertain more to the operation of your office on a day-to-day basis. And most of us have offsite storage. If not, generate a disc or CD or whatever, and hand it to one of your clerks and let them take it home, and do that continually. And don't forget a back-up system. Now, that back-up system is, I mean, that's kind of like a no brainer, because digital records are subject to being, well, I wouldn't say evaporated but, again, in Orleans Parish, what happened, their political system is a little different from ours, so the clerk was in charge of all the land records and Court -- land records. The Judges were in charge of all the Court records and they had possession of the computer system. They failed -- or they -- let's put it this way, I don't want to point blame or point a finger, but there was a failure in backing up their records. The clerk lost 12 years of mortgage records. That stopped completely -- and this, this can also refer to elections --

that stopped the land purchase, property purchase system in the City of -- in the Parish of Orleans for about a month-and-a-half, almost two months. It was horrible, because without mortgages you can't research and see who owes what to who, on a certain piece of property, so nobody is going to buy it, you know. You can't -- you have to have -- and a bank won't finance it without a mortgage certificate. So that applies to other records besides the election records, but it's just as important for election records to be backed up, also all your registration records. We're fortunate in Louisiana that we have a statewide registration system where all of those records are kept in Baton Rouge and available over a network to all the registrars. But I'm sure that the Secretary of State maintains a sufficient back-up system. And we ought to do that in the offices, too, not just for the voters, but all of your expenses, your recoupment of the expenses, your poll workers' payments and things like that are all -- should all be backed up.

Then, you have to execute the plan naturally. Hopefully, we don't have to execute it. Hopefully, we have avoided a disaster to start with. But, you or your personnel may have a personal disaster at the same time which occurs, and we spoke about that this morning. That's why your people are so important and your lists of however you communicate with them. Shirley -- I'm sorry.

DR. KING:

Shelley.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I'm sorry?

DR. KING:

Shelley.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Excuse me. Shelley mentioned this morning a phone tree, and that's a wonderful idea. It's simple and it's almost automatic to keep in touch with all your staff. Your local first responders, we talked about contingencies this morning. Those local first responders should be on the plan itself. They should have a copy so if you're unable to contact them, they have an automatic response. Access a written plan. And again, I've emphasized written, and the plan should be readily available. In other words, like we talked about this morning, again, I think this -- my presentation is kind of redundant -- it's all communicate, communicate, communicate amongst ourselves and amongst all the agencies that are related to your function, and especially those of you that need a response. And share it with people. You know knowledge is power, but it's more powerful if everybody shares it. And that's from the state level on down to the local level.

Remediation, this is -- this really doesn't pertain to what we're talking about, but I think part of your plan, at least, your continuation of operation plan, should include some of this. If you happen to have damage to your records, to your equipment, to your office, to your physical facilities, number one, it's not rocket science. You don't need to be a genius to figure out what's already been done by other agencies. And groups like this, I think, are important because we share the information of past experience. Use commonsense, you may have to use a trailer. You might have to use a rented apartment, whatever, to be able to house your

personnel, house what equipment you have left and to provide a point of contact.

Time is of the essence and if you can plan for the remediation within your catastrophe response plan, then you've already taken care of half of the problem, because you should have identified contractors that could be -- contractors in advance to do remediation. You can have facilities offsite. You can also have intergovernmental agreement. I can't emphasize this more, and I think, again, Stan, you talked about that this morning, your fellow county officials helped you and -- but you had to have a Court order, I think, to be able to have them move their machines to your county.

MR. STANART:

Well, they needed authority to be able to send it to us.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Right.

MR. STANART:

Yeah.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

But intergovernmental agreements would have straightened that all up, and that's one thing we don't really think about. We think that everybody wants to help one another, but we have statutory constraints that we have to consider. Again, contracts in place with vendors of services to remediate your records, and equipment, maybe, find locally, if you know what you need. And if you know what you need and have a communication system with your fellow election officials, it will speed that up also. Use reputable

companies, but shop around for prices and references, because even reputable companies, sometimes, if they are in high demand, it will cost you a lot more.

Understand the level of remediation you need under the circumstances. You may not need to remediate blank ballots, you don't need them anymore, just get some new ones. You may not need to remediate voting records that are past their useful time, so to speak, or past a statutory limit. And practice makes perfect. That's all I can say. So, just don't let that happen to you.

DR. KING:

All right thank you, Charlie. I'm trying to envision procurement's reaction to my order for chicken processing boxes.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Whether we'll have to put that out on a state bid or not.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

And I'll come up with a proper name for them unless you know it.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

I sensed a theme there with the plan called COP and the boxes for chicken.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Maybe so.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

I have a couple of questions I wanted to follow-up on, Charlie. The first is, for those of us who could watch Katrina unfold on our television sets, over the days and weeks that that event unfolded,

even for us, from the vantage point outside, it was hard to fully understand the scope of the disaster. For someone who was on the ground, when do you feel like it was understood the size of the problem, the complexity of the solution, and the timeline that it was going to take to address it?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I don't think some of the country realize how bad the disaster was, even today, because at that time the warehouse I worked in was located in the Lower Ninth Ward. And New Orleans is, how many people? A couple a million people I think.

MR. SMITH:

Back then.

MR. JAGNEAUX :

Back then, yeah. And we would leave that warehouse at night, we had generators there for power, but you wouldn't see a light bulb in 20 square miles along the interstates coming out on either side. It just boggles the mind. And then, you'd see for months and months and months afterwards that brown line that showed how high the water came, and then, all the blue tarps on the roof, that still some of them are there. But I think what people don't realize that most floods come and go in, say, a week or two. This flood stayed, I don't know, three, four weeks in one spot. And the thing about a major city like that, all of the infrastructure, as far as heating, cooling, air conditioning, whatever, are located in the basement. All of those basements flooded in the business district and all of the outlying areas, too. So, you really had -- it took so long to get utilities back, it was unbelievable. I know Lowe's and Home Depot

were operating, but they operated on generator power and they didn't open for about two-and-a-half months after the hurricane. And even -- and that's when they used generators.

DR. KING:

Um-hum.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

I mean, that was -- just access was a problem.

DR. KING:

Okay. The other question that I had, and I'm looking at your photographs and how labor intensive the solution was and looking at the young lady with the mask on, I think one of the things that we've not talked about in our discussion so far, is the amount of time and the remediation planning that's required. And if you could give us a sense of the timeline from when the event, the disaster terminated, and the assessment was completed, how long until you were able to fully restore capabilities of the office.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

One thing you have to understand is the psychology of it, because you would see people in the city, say, three, four, five months afterwards, and the looks on their faces told you that something had happened. And that impact was so great on -- and in this particular instance, was so great on the staff, because their friends were dislocated to other parts of the country, their homes were all destroyed. The clerk herself had to move 40 miles west of the city. And most of them had to move at the same time. So, as far as the timeline, I would say that the real assessments didn't start taking place until about three months after.

However, people and offices who had contracts in place with disaster companies, remediation companies, they were -- those companies, excuse me, were in the city within maybe a week or two. So, that's how important it is to have those contracts in place. If you don't have that plan and something like this happens, and especially this magnitude, because in this one warehouse, there were 10,000 of these chicken boxes, 10,000, and completely full packed of documents. So, you can imagine how -- plus, there were -- in this other building with the open files that you see on the screen, that's about eight shelves of open files packed shoulder to shoulder. And there were about 185 to 200 feet of files eight high that had to be remediated. And the problem was, time was of the essence. The summer came along, the heat was there, the moisture was there, mold and mildew, terrible. All of those papers, except the ones that were tightly packed and not wet, had to be brought to a plant that I built, and had to be remediated 120 miles from the city, because you couldn't find employees in the city to do it, everybody was gone. So, you had to ship it out to a makeshift plant that we created, and have people from that local area to process each page.

DR. KING:

Were there health concern issues with inhaling mold and mildew from workers?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, in my past life I was a pharmacist, and from what I've read in studying the mold situation, and correct me if I'm wrong, and maybe the public knows better, but there's never been a case of infection

from black mold. There may have been allergies to mold, people are allergic, people get sinus problems, lung problems, but it's all created by the allergy to the mold. The papers that we have in front of us, that we had for any length of time, in the case of election records or any other kind of records that have been in a Courthouse or a storage facility, there's mold on those papers already. The two ingredients that are missing, however, are moisture and heat. As long as they're kept dehumidified and reasonably cool, it won't generate it. But it's constantly -- it's in the air all around us. And it's -- but there's no infections from it, but there's a great fear of it. And that drove a lot of people to avoid contact with those records. And that in a way prevented a lot of the, how do you call it, the evaluation process too because by the time people got back in mold had already started and they were, you know, fearful of it. And you can't blame them.

DR. KING:

All right, I think we had a comment that came in on the Web.

MS. LAYSON:

We did, from the Williamson County Texas elections department. They gave us a tip, and recommended that we include -- or that election officials include amateur radio operators as a means of communication during a crisis, which I don't think we had mentioned before.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Brilliant, yeah, great idea.

MS. LAYSON:

Thank you for that.

MR. SMITH:

I saw that the -- I don't know if it was FEMA or the Red Cross that put up the slide with all the symbols of the different civic organizations, but they had ARRL up there, which is the ham radio operators. I think it was the Red Cross gentleman, Trevor, who put that up there. But, yeah, they had the ham radio operators as one of their partner groups.

DR. KING:

I wanted to make a comment on something that Charlie said in his presentation, about the importance of offsite. And then, I have a question I'd like to pose to the roundtable panel about statutes, rules and regs that are potentially impediments to our response to disaster, or those that may provide us guidance for our actions in disaster.

But the observation, in the IT world, there's been a saying around for a long time, which is, if it's not offsite it's not backed up, and that came out of many, many instances of people backing up data, stacking the back-ups beside their computer, and both being lost in a fire or theft or whatever. So, I think an important criteria for the jurisdictions that may be watching us today is, they think about backing up is the notion of the criticality of offsite. Some jurisdictions, that offsite nature is mandated. In Georgia, it's the Clerk of Superior Court that's already a channel that's open. But certainly, we'd recommend, if there's not a pre-identified channel for backing up, that may be another item in your reciprocity agreement with a sister county, or an intergovernmental agreement that you will provide reciprocal housing for records.

But the question that I'd like to pose to the panel, and also Charlie, to get you to reflect back on what may have happened as you worked through the issues of your flood, is, I think one of the things that seems to be universal around the country is that the statutes that govern election procedures and derivative Secretary of State rules, Election Commission rules, et cetera, they're evolutionary, they evolve, and one of the consequences of that is they're scattered all over the place, and so, that if you're asked to identify all areas of the statutes in your state that impact disaster planning, disaster recovery, give temporary authority to make decisions, I know I would be hard pressed to find all those locations in my state's code.

So, my question to the panel is, what has been your experience? And Stan, I'd like to start with you, because I know that you specifically referenced some of the intergovernmental agreement issues that had to be resolved. But is this an area that needs to be looked at within states? Or is it something that is uneven throughout the states?

MR. STANART:

I don't know what other states are doing, but I know that we did not have this, the agreements. We had to work out each individual agreement, from county to county, for those that we were working on. So,, like I said, that meeting of the minds that we had, we had a representative from the Secretary of State there. And we're actually proposing to them, now, that they, you know, create the forms, so that, you know, they'll be standard across the state, send it all to the elections administrators or the county clerks, whoever is

responsible for elections, and then, they would actually then keep a list of which counties have these. So, if a county has a problem, they'd go just to one point of contact to be able to say, you know, "Who can we go to for help?" And they'll say, "Well, so and so has that same equipment you have, and they're in the county, you know, next door or two counties over, and they likely would have extra equipment." So, you need -- for a disaster like this, I think it's important that the Secretary of State be kind of the central conduit of the knowledge base of who has what and who has what agreements. I think that would work, a model that could be used across the whole country.

DR. KING:

Okay, excellent suggestion. Shelley?

MS. McTHOMAS:

I honestly am not aware of what's in place in the State of Missouri, but I'll find out.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MS. McTHOMAS:

It's definitely something to explore further and make sure that we are prepared adequately.

DR. KING:

Okay, yeah, I think my experience has been, when anomalies arise there's usually someone assigned within the organization to start researching the statutes, what needs to be followed, what needs to be set aside, what do we need to ask the Court to provide some mitigation with. So Stan…

MR. STANART:

Well, election law is something we have to follow, okay? We don't have any discretion. Now, in our state, though the Secretary of State does have, I believe, the authority to make adjustments that would be needed in an emergency type basis. So, you know, if you get an emergency, I'm sure they're going to be there to help serve, you know, ultimately our constituents.

DR. KING:

I agree.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think the average election office probably doesn't have the legal expertise. I mean, perhaps that type of ability exists at a Secretary of State level, where you can assign people to begin researching the relevant code sections and so forth.

But, I think there's another dynamic in elections that makes it just a little different. Regardless of the code, you have this bipartisan thing that goes on, at least in Ohio, where things are seemingly overseen by bipartisan teams. I happen to know of a particular situation in a small community where a flood occurred, and trying to do what was right, a particular elections director went in and began to remove servers and computers to protect them from the rising flood waters, only to find herself in some difficulty after the flood came and went, that she had basically done this in a less than bipartisan way. So, I think there's a set of dynamics at play in the elections industry that makes it just a little different, perhaps, and harder to get at, than would be in the private industry.

I also think it's important, talking about backing things up, just to go back for a second, you know, IT is pretty new to people in elections. If you think about it, we were using punch cards until 2002. So, this whole new world of offsite and backing up and that type of behavior is still pretty new, and there are many, many smaller jurisdictions, as we discussed earlier, that simply don't have that type of technical support. And I think that is something that the folks that are responsible for the financing of those organizations need to think about.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, we're fortunate in Louisiana, I guess we're fortunate, that the Secretary of State is in charge of all the procuring of the equipment and pretty much is the chief elections director. He has a commission of elections underneath him, so all of our equipment is uniform. We have assistance from the Secretary of State's Office that sometimes visits us on election night, when we have a hot election, or a large election to help us overcome any problems with the equipment that we might have. But, I think Shelley, you were right about the Secretary of States. They need to -- and I think most of them have plans in place for, you know, any contingencies like that. I just wish they would communicate with the lower levels more than they have so far.

DR. KING:

Okay. Another thing that Charlie's presentation prompted me to think about is regarding communication. During an emergency

your staff will watch a variety of media outlets, and I live near the Atlanta area, so there's quite a smorgasbord. And sometimes, in an emergency, the different outlets will draw different conclusions about the passability of roads, the danger in certain areas. And one of the things that we have a policy on, is that we all anchor off of a single outlet, and so, whatever story is coming out of that outlet, at least we're all hearing the same message. Whether it's accurate or not, we're responding in a coordinated way.

The last question that I have for you Charlie, dealt with your advice to prioritize records and that if you have to allocate resources, and particularly manpower in the short run, you need to be applying it to the most important things first. Can you give some broad, general advice or description about how you go about prioritizing data, examples of what's at the top of the list, what's in the middle, and then, what do you get to if there's time and resource?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, as I said, in Louisiana, we have a centralized statewide registration system. So, the paper records that are in the registrar's office, those are not quite as important as say they would be in another jurisdiction or in another state where that's where the registration is stored. But registration of records, if you have them, registration changes, payroll records for your staff, because they like to get paid if it lasts any length of time. In my case, in my other job, of land records, Court records, things like that on down. And I guess, when you come down to it, the prioritization comes from your record retention schedule. You look at which records have to

be retained the longest, and I would almost guess that -- I would guess that those are probably the most important. So, that would be a good place to start with the record retention schedule that you have to determine which ones are more important and which ones are prioritized. But then again, like I said, you have to share that with all the first responders, so that they'll know where they're located and how to treat them.

DR. KING:

All right, I have a question I'd like to start with Ed, and kind of work around. It has to do with another point that Charlie made about the use of generators, and I'm going to kind of generalize that as industrial equipment, unfamiliar equipment. And one of the things that we hear about each year when there are disasters is that somebody will move their generator indoors and there will be a carbon monoxide issue, et cetera. And a lot of that stems from people utilizing tools that they're not familiar with. And I know I've seen over the years that even though my staff is extremely well trained in the management of IT, I don't know they know which end of a pipe wrench to grab if they were doing that kind of work. It's an unusual tool to them.

So, the question that I have is, because these disasters often introduce rapidly new technologies and a very short time how to use them effectively, is that something, as you're preparing your response teams or you're looking at the preparedness of the people that you have in the field, do you have discussions about them utilizing new tools or using old tools in new ways that may be unfamiliar and possibly marginally effective?

MR. SMITH:

Well Merle, every situation is different, every situation is very high tempo, high pressure, what not. So, having those discussions, actually, would be quite difficult. But the people who you send and people who do field service in elections, in general, and people who do field operations at the jurisdictions are often very good at working under those circumstances because elections have deadlines. You can't just move out a federal election date, for instance. So, they're used to working under high pressure, firm deadlines, solid deadlines. So, they'll improvise and they'll work through it. And fortunately, with the rigorous standards that the EAC, through the voluntary voting systems guidelines, have in place, has a pretty significant portion of electrical testing of the units, so that you can run them on a generator.

Having worked in environmental cleanups for a few years way back in my day, we would run mobile laboratories. We would run those off generators, and some of that laboratory equipment just wasn't suited to run off generators. It was just too much variation in the power, whereas, on the other hand, the voting machines, whether they be 2002, 2005 tested, and those are, of course, voting system standards that can note, can withstand what a decent quality semi-consumer up to industrial generator outputs, because it's not a beautiful sine wave like you get from a power company. It's a little noisy and it's a little yucky, and in terms of its power quality, but they can withstand that.

DR. KING:

Okay. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think this is where your partnerships, particularly, with your emergency management people. And I'm a big advocate of finding the right people for the right job and letting them do what they know how to do. I described a situation earlier of an electrical failure in a particular part of the county on Election Day, knew I had two hours of battery back-up, called in the EMA director, who then put it on a portable generator until we could determine what, you know, with the power company, what the situation was going to be. When they told us it was going to be pretty much a day-long event, it was he then, that brought in a fire truck from a fire department and literally wired the building to the fire truck's generator and ran the building most of the day off of a fire truck. So, I don't think you can expect poll workers or even election officials to do something like that. And I think that's where your partnerships come into play and play a critical role in your success.

DR. KING:

Okay, any other comments?

MS. McTHOMAS:

I would agree. We did look into generators in 2008, and had done all this research, and kind of went into a panic mode about how big that election was going to be, and what it was going to mean, and we did all this research and was about to spend money. And then, we thought, let's ask our building manager about what's available in this building, and discovered we didn't have to worry. That building had a generator already in place. So, I guess, the lesson there is

look right in your own backyard, first, before you go off and do too much in a contingency plan.

DR. KING:

And perhaps don't make assumptions about…

MS. McTHOMAS:

Right, don't make assumptions.

DR. KING:

…the skill set. I think that's your point is that's pretty specialized knowledge about how to calculate an amp load for a generator.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Exactly, yeah.

DR. KING:

Stan?

MR. STANART:

Like I said, our voting machines all have battery capabilities to last all day. So, we're fortunate. Of course, you know, but we have technicians that, you know, if the need be, they could always bring out more equipment. Generators, I just don't see a big need of doing that. And like you know Keith said, you know, if we need to, we can go to those emergency people, they have plenty of those available to them. And maybe in a few targeted places we might do something just so we'd have another back-up, you know. We're always doing back-up contingencies, so -- I know the building that we're getting ready to replace the one that burned down, we will have a generator there, but just for limited type stuff. So, you know, for -- so, that we can do pickup, for Election Day pickup so that, you know, there are servers that are there, a small number, that just

keep track of our equipment and just a nominal amount of lighting, so that people can come in and get their equipment. But we don't anticipate there will be any length of time that we would actually have to have a lot of back-up power. But we're thinking through all those contingencies, what do we do, and what do the emergency other people can do for us. It has to be part of the whole picture.

DR. KING:

Okay, very good.

MS. McTHOMAS:

We were actually doing a "what if" scenario, and thought we'd get through this Election Day in 2008, but what if something actually prevented us from actually tabulating the results and issuing the results, wouldn't that be terrible? We made it to the finish line and couldn't take the ball over the line, and that's when we started thinking about generators at that point. So...

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I hate to take us down to anecdotal information, but your comments about the stability of generators and so forth reminds me of a situation where a voting machine kept failing all day, and we, after struggling with it, later found out it was plugged into the same circuit that a commercial grade coffeemaker was plugged into, and every time the hotplate would kick on, it would drop the voltage enough that it would shut the voting machine down. It took us all day to figure that out but, you know...

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

So, you had to choose between caffeine and democracy.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Yeah, yeah.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

Well, I have one last question that I'd like to pose to Charlie, and then, get reflections from the group, and then, we're going to swap out, and Stan I'm going to ask you to come up.

One of the most important things that we can do after any event is the debrief, kind of, the lessons learned to evaluate not only our response to the disaster, but maybe, just as importantly, the quality of our plan, the quality of our planning process, and the execution of the plan. In your event, was there reflections that you could share about afterwards, as you look back on, not so much what you would do differently, but what you identified as working well in your planning process, and then, other things that you modified in your planning process as you went forward, as the result of that experience?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

That's hard to say because I have to give credit to the Clerk of Court there, and also our Secretary of State at the time, for what they went through with the magnitude of the situation.

I think that -- looking back, I think that time was the biggest problem and that had there been contracts in place to do remediation and to make sure that evaluations were done immediately, and not waited upon. But you can't blame anybody at the same time because of all the dislocation and the distances and the psychological trauma that everybody went through. But I think

contracts in place, in advance, with companies that are capable of taking care of your records, and doing all that for you, because a lot us -- I have a little bit of experience with it, but I wouldn't trust myself to evaluate large records in other situations, but companies have specialists that do that for us. So, I think, just like Stan's insurance policy, this would be a good insurance policy to have too.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

It would save you a lot of misery.

DR. KING:

Well, I'm going to ask Stan the same question, but I'm going to wait until after his presentation. If we can then, can we swap out? And while we're swapping, I have a question that's come in from the Internet.

MS. LAYSON:

Yes, this is from Tammy Patrick in Maricopa County Arizona. She says, "The overall structure and organizational format of a contingency plan can impact its useful. Election timelines and calendars play such an integral role in election administration that in Maricopa County we chose to organize our plan based on when the disaster occurs within our election cycle 120 days out, 90 days out, 30 days out, a week out, weekend before, Election Day, and then post-election, and then, within that time period, breaking it down to the physical location that has been impacted; each of our offices and warehouses, single polling location versus multiple polling locations, early voting sites, et cetera. This format allowed

for us to hone in on exactly what election materials may be impacted at each stage and location, and how to mitigate or recover. Many plans that we hear about are in reaction to a specific type of disaster such as a fire, flood or hurricane. What other approaches to organizing the actual plan are others using?"

DR. KING:

That is a good question. I think earlier today Keith brought up the point that where you are in the cycle does address the essential functions that Damon spoke about as being a key component.

What other ways are there to kind of view the contingency plan?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, I think, so far we've talked about contingency plan and it's -- in light of the question, I think the question is probably a pretty good answer, because it seems like most contingency plans are for one-size-fits all. But, in the case of the question, I think maybe that would be a very good guide as far as organizing the contingency plan, you know, on a timeline basis and also -- and at the same time, prioritizing what's important along with it. But the timeline sounds great. I hadn't thought of that.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I think the -- and we did talk earlier about the timeline because the timeline is going to have a direct impact on, "A" how much time you have to recover from the incident, what particular items, documents, equipment and so forth you need to, you know -- as I said before, in a pre-election place, saving the voted ballots is going to be a concern, and during the election, saving voted and

unvoted is going to be a concern. I think Tammy knows the answer to this, and that is it's -- and I'm sure their plan is quite thorough in Maricopa County and -- it almost becomes a daily evaluation of where you are in the process, be it pre, during or post-election. I guess, I don't really think there are any other things to look at, other than size, you know, when and -- when, and the magnitude of it, how much of the community gets affected. And I think that changes where you drop things off, so on and so forth.

DR. KING:

Okay, Jeannie?

MS. LAYSON:

And let me also mention that Maricopa County has signed up in our election official exchange as an expert, and one of those areas of expertise is contingency planning. So, I would highly recommend that anybody who's looking for some direction to check out Maricopa County in the election exchange.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

I think Maricopa County is pretty good at most things.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Yeah.

MS. LAYSON:

Um-hum.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Yeah, that's why the question was such a good answer.

MS. LAYSON:

Yes.

DR. KING:

Yeah, I guess -- I will try to answer that question, but I'm going to come back and say I think they've got the right perspective. And another way that you could look at organizing your contingency plan is to look at the value of the assets. That's a common metric that's used in IT. And for us, you know, in the election field, we have the most valuable thing is the voted ballot. That's at the top of the list, and then, you could work down. So, that would be another way to stratify it.

But I think the validity of the strategy that they have in Maricopa is, it reflects how election officials think. So, even though we're thinking about mitigating risk to devices or to materials or to processes, the way that we know where those materials are, is to know where we are in the election lifecycle. And so, that's what gives us the -- kind of the perspective of where to find those assets, to know where they are, where they -- what the risks are at that point in the lifecycle. So, I think there are other ways to do it, but I'm pretty sure there's not a better way to do it than what they're describing, in terms of mapping it to the lifecycle of the election.

And thank you for that question from Maricopa County.

Stan?

MR. STANART:

Greetings.

DR. KING:

Set us on fire.

[Laughter]

MR. STANART:

All right, from blaze to praise.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Light us up.

MR. STANART:

Here we go. All right, Harris County, little piece of Texas, kind of a big piece of Texas, though. We've got over 4,092,000 population, according to the last Census. That makes us larger than 24 states. Okay, here our Election Technology Center. As we mentioned, you know, election always gets the old building, but this is where we were.

And what happened? August 27th, last year, 67 days before the election -- do we have audio on this?

MS. LAYSON:

No, we don't.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Implement your contingency plan.

MS. LAYSON:

Yeah contingency plan, move forward, and we'll try to mitigate that way.

MR. STANART:

All right, well, boy, you really ought to hear the audio. Well, yeah, I could grab my laptop if we wanted to, because I do have it on there.

MS. LAYSON:

You just keep talking, we'll mitigate.

MR. STANART:

All right, well, one of the things about this is the -- is this going to play? It's not playing. Okay, that should be video there. It's not playing. It automatically plays. All right, then, we'll wing it.

Anyway, what I had in here is the video of actually what happened, some clips of the news media of the actual fire that happened. But the end result was, you know, our building burned down, okay? And it destroyed our voting machines.

All right, of course, the response is, we've got to keep calm and carry on. All right and, of course, Beverly Kaufman was the County Clerk before me. She retired last year and she actually had a little audio here of her speaking telling us about this situation. It should automatically play.

All right, anyway, the biggest thing we had to do is be optimistic, because the public is watching, okay? And whatever we do, we've got to be positive and say, "We're going to pull this together. It's 67 days out and we're going to make it happen." And that's the message that, number one, you have to set in your mind. Number one, you've got to do this. You have no option. The election will happen, and you might as well let everybody else know you're going to make it happen. And then, you have to work hard.

Plans, you know, before the end of the catastrophic day, you know. The media is all over this, every station. And like I said, we had to make sure that everybody knew that we would have a timely election.

Our county judge, you know, assured the voters, also, that we would be there. And this is just a whole message that went out across everybody that was there that we're going to make this happen. And that consistent message, you have to bring in all the stakeholders and you have to bring in, you know, everybody that's going to be involved in this, so that that message can be consistent.

All right audio, the laptop is not responding, gentlemen. It got stuck. We'll just jump down real quick. All right, go live here. Anyway, like I said, everyone, you know, assured everyone that the integrity of our election would go forward, you know. That was our plan. I'm pressing the down arrow and nothing is happening.

MS. LAYSON:

It's a big file, so it...

MR. STANART:

All right, anyway, the number of pre-disaster early voting locations that we had was 37 locations. For Election Day, we had 736 actual polling locations. That was what the plan was before the fire. That was our plan after the fire, okay? We're going to comply with every law, state and federal law. That has to still be our priority. We will make sure that all of our voting sites were HAVA compliant. We're still going to have handicapped accessibility at every location. All voters will be provided fair and equal access to the voting process, okay?

Here's another video where that we're assessing the loss. I wish you guys could see all this.

Going to the next slide, this laptop is ...

MR. SMITH:

We just see the 97 degrees at five o'clock in the afternoon.

[Laughter]

MR. STANART:

This is Houston, okay? Just expect that. Anyway, this is -- on Friday 4 a.m. is when the fire happened, okay? And we will get -- in our building, we had an inventory of over 16,000 pieces of voting

equipment and support items, you know, tons of equipment, okay? Over 7,000 eSlate voting machines, 1,600 disabled units, 2,870 judge booth controllers, laptops, printers, cards, modems, cell phones, hand scanners, carts, everything that you need. And that's what it looked like, all squished, all reduced inventory to a pile of scrap.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

What was the cause?

MR. STANART:

Over $40 million.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

No, the cause, I'm sorry.

MR. STANART:

Oh, the cause? Nothing was ever determined, probably a short, electrical fire of some sort. There was no hard cause, actually found. But, yeah, over $30 million of voting equipment, and then, $10 million loss of everything else, total loss. The challenge, 67 days. What do we do? And here's this other video file that's taking a second here.

All right, of course, you know the challenge is pulling off, you know, a normal election infrastructure. And with the election clock ticking, 51 days before early voting begun, 67 days before the Election Day. Okay, first of all, we've got to make sure our key county staff is onsite to deal with the consequences, those emergency people. You know just everybody across the county got engaged, okay? All your political leaders have to get engaged. As an office that runs elections, we had to sit there and look at all of

our, you know, capabilities of what other resources were available to us. And then, we had to meet with, you know, the team, come up with what we've hopefully already planned and talked about because now it's time to execute that emergency plan. And then, we met, of course, with our election vendor. They actually drove down, flew down. They were there the same day of the fire. Because we had to put together, what do we need, what do we have to do to pull forward. We got our Commissioners Court to call an emergency meeting. That was for Monday morning. So, the team worked their tails off over that weekend putting together everything that they would need to be able to do to come up and start executing, because there is no other solution. You will perform your election. We provided those reports to the Commissioners Court, brought together the recovery teams. Find a temporary workspace, okay? You've got to start securing borrowed equipment. You've got to start testing, you know, everything you need to do to get your equipment ready to be able to pull off an election. And here we go again, election plan. Hopefully, we'll have the videos and stuff up on the site.

MS. LAYSON:

Oh, absolutely.

MR. STANART:

Because it really is -- to actually see the videos is a nice extra feature to it.

MS. LAYSON:

Absolutely, we'll have everyone's presentation, including yours, available on the Website, so you can take a look.

MR. STANART:

Three days after the fire, just three days we were before Commissioners Court with emergency plan to actually pull off the elections, okay? And here again, we're going to be confident. And, you know, we want to do things the same way before. Our voters knew how to use the eSlate voting machines, you know. To try to put something different on them we thought was just too much. Of course, all of our mail balloting system was still tied around the Hart system. That was not destroyed. And so, doing things the same was very important. Now, we didn't know we was going to have enough equipment to pull it off, so we came up with a contingency plan to also make paper ballots available for voters on Election Day. We've not had -- you know, ten years ago, we had the punch card system before we went electronic, but the voters for almost ten years, now, that's all they know is the eSlates, you know. Of course, speedy acquisition, loan or purchase, beg, borrow or steal the election equipment, you need to conduct the election timely. Of course the -- this is across the whole media, it gets much attention, you know, the Commissioners Court okaying our plan. Like I said, why use the pre-disaster equipment? This video talked about that. And it's, like I said, it's compatible with what we use, what we know. Our -- everybody on our team, they know how to use the Hart eSlate system. It works with our tally machine. It works with all of our paper mail-in ballot processing machines, just that consistency. And it's been used since 2001, and countywide since 2002. It is familiar to voters.

Of course, key, like I mentioned multiple times today, insurance, okay? How many counties can absorb a $40 million loss, okay? That's huge, okay? Thankfully, you know -- yeah, for a lot of counties, that's their budget. I mean, we did have insurance on the building and on the contents. And the end result is, we have new -- getting a new -- well, it's not a new building, but it's a great deal for the taxpayers. In fact, we're going to have almost -- we'll have over a 60,000 square foot building that replaces our 37,000 square foot building. So, we'll have more space that insurance is going to pay for, and we'll also have new voting equipment.

Of course, you've got to think about, you know, preclearance certification. Do anything differently, that's another complexity that you just don't have time for. And, of course, your candidates supported the plan, the parties supported the plan, you know. Here's a little Republican candidate, Stan Stanart here, saying, "I have no objection." Okay well, as you know, I wasn't running this office at that time, I was newly elected, as Beverly Kaufman did retire.

Most importantly, you know, the eSlate paper ballot system used an absentee vote, you know, would not have any legal issues. It's what our voters are familiar with and can be consistent. And here, again, a little video. All right, higher than voter turnout, okay? Because everybody knows about the fire and just the environment of election, you know, we anticipated higher than normal turnout. And we did have that.

Borrow the voting equipment, you know. That's what was necessary to us, to be successful in this. And, of course, this is the

factory down in Sugarland where Hart had these machines built at, and they worked, you know, 24/7 to turn out enough machines so that we would be able to have enough for Election Day. Most of – well, we'll get into here in a minute. Of course, encourage everybody to do the absentee and early voting, you know, so that -- we knew we wouldn't have the full complement of machines on Election Day, so we tried to drive as many people to go vote early, or if you're over 65, to do the mail ballot.

And of course, here again, all of the compliance with the federal and state election calendar and law. Teamwork, this is a team effort. There is nobody that makes this happen. It is every election worker. It's every person working. This is in central count, where they're opening up a ballot box, you know. It's that, you know, E=mC squared, you got to move fast. It's critical to -- because it's C square.

We used the Reliant Arena, which is where the Astrodome is, and so, there was actually -- you know that's your normal rodeo grounds where the rodeo is at, and there's space available. Just do not compete with the rodeo, okay?

[Laughter]

MR. STANART:

When it comes down to Houston, Texas, okay, you can use the area. It's just that, you know, come January 1, you got to be out of there, because they're getting ready for the rodeo.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

The rodeo, yeah.

MR. STANART:

So, it's priorities in Houston.

And then, like I said, the inner-local cooperation agreements. These are the things we had to work out with the different counties, you know, we were borrowing equipment from, but that's a necessary part of government. And the equipment came in, you know. It started showing up. This is about one-third of our delivery that we actually do for our voting precincts, and so, we've got a few -- a number of equipment. And then, Election Day pickup, the JBCs, paper ballots and poll books and supplies ready for pickup. Now, the paper, I want you to think about this, because our ballot is probably about the longest ballot in the United States, this was two tabloid sheets of paper, front and back. That's one ballot. So, you start adding that up, we've got every precinct -- the average precinct got two to three cases of paper.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

That's heavy.

MR. STANART:

It's heavy. The logistics of it is kind of a nightmare, but we had to do this, because we did not know we would have enough election machines for Election Day, so that's part of that contingency planning, another piece of back-up. I mean, it costs -- all them paper ballots cost us six, $700,000. Thankfully, insurance paid for that. That was part the -- so, very expensive. Another little video of some of the machine coming in from another county. All right, there's Beverly Kaufman, you know. Overall 11 counties provided 384 JBCs, 1,000 eSlates and 266 eSlate handicap units. The majority of the equipment was obtained about a month after the fire,

so kudos to everyone that helped. In addition, other non eSlate counties provided 1,600 ballot boxes, over 4,000 voting booths. And that's just a little logistics, those voting booths, it takes a lot of them to pull this off. And Centron, you know, where Ed actually said he worked at one time here, they actually were the ones that worked 24/7, you know, building the eSlate -- Hart eSlate machines, so that we'd be ready for Election Day.

The -- you know, the end result was the Justice Department approved what we did, the plan, because we did things the same way we normally do it. You don't have to jump through special hoops. When you start deviating, if you try to go to another manufacturer or something, you've got training issues, you've got voter familiarity issues. It's just a myriad of issues that -- don't waste your time on it, do what everybody knows how to do.

The end result, as you can see, the difference between 2006 and 2010, you know, 83 versus 100 judge booth controllers for early voting, the number of voting machines, disabled units. This is real close. So, we basically had, you know, a close complement of numbers that was necessary to pull off the elections. Here's the difference, kind of the ratio total voting booths available. Back in 2006, you know, per poll we had an average of 8.4. We had an average of 7.4, you know, just a small off on Election Day. So -- and we did have the paper ballots, of course.

Harris County, we met the challenge replacing the lost voting machines, you know. We were ready to pull it off. And the end result, a nice little video where people are saying, "Everything seemed normal, everything worked fine." And that's what we need

to do. That's what people expect. So, when you -- even when you got that, "Oh," you fill in the blank moment, okay, know that your duty is to pull it off the same. And when you put that mentality expectation on yourself, every election official out there can do the same. So, whatever that disaster is, know you're going to make it happen, know that you're going to need help in making it happen, too. But, there's the resources out there to help you make that happen.

The -- back in 2006, we had over 6,000 -- 600,000 votes. In 2010, we had almost 800,000 votes cast. So, you know, quite a bit of a gain. And as you can see here, our mail ballots was 55,000. The actual -- let's see which one -- the total absentee -- let's see, the early vote was 392,000, and the actual vote on Election Day was 351. And, you know, we broke early voting records for a non-Presidential election year. That's our ballot. It shows you -- that's Beverly Kaufman there.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Oh, my God.

MR. SMITH:

That's so nasty.

MR. STANART:

Okay. It's like I said -- that's the front and back, now, she's showing you.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

That's ugly.

MR. STANART:

That's an ugly ballot.

MR. SMITH:

That's nasty, that's all you can say.

MR. STANART:

Okay, but here's the thing, with every polling location -- I want you to look at this number here. When we give people the choice between paper and plastic, that's what we told them, when they come in to vote, only 2.8 percent chose paper to vote on. Of our -- of those voting on Election Day, there was only 9,600 paper ballots cast. So our voters are used to the electronic machines. That's what they wanted to vote on. Even though there was some communities out there saying, "Oh, we've got to vote on paper, we've got to vote on paper," that was very, very small. So, this is the statistic that I think is very notable that when given a choice, the voters choose to go with electronic machines.

Of course, the praise, that's when the blaze the praise is the public accolades, and this video actually had the accolades from the people there.

All right, "Job well done," the Houston Chronicle, "Veteran Harris County Clerk Kaufman retired after crowning achievement." And she went out with accolades.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

In a blaze of glory.

MR. STANART:

That's right, in a blaze of glory.

So, anyway, statewide acknowledgement, meeting the challenge, and it was something to behold because many, many people predicted that Harris County was going to be in a lot of

trouble. And I'll tell you what, there is not a finer team than the team that I have that runs elections in Harris County. And you've got to admit I have reason to be proud of them, because they pulled off something that is quite unimaginable. And I want to give them, you know, an official salute to the best team in the United States. I know there's people that will say otherwise, but for me, they are the best.

Anyway, reflection, okay? Staff experience, emergency management can facilitate recovery, okay? We did have those discussions of "what if." We did have a plan to do what, you know, if there was problems. So, there had been that discussion, it had already been going on. I give accolades to my director of elections for that. Precautionary work measures minimize the impact of a disaster. Budget constraint will always impact a county's ability to project voting equipment -- to protect voting equipment from disaster, okay? I wish we had, you know, full sprinklers in the building that we had, and we will have that in the new building. And we will have a firewall that divides our equipment. But the reality is, you can't have everything you want. I mean, ideally, you might divvy up your equipment through places in the county and have this big staff that can handle it. I have 32 full-time people in Harris County to pull off, you know, the third largest, you know, county election in the United States. Now, I have a whole army of temporary people and Election Day people, you know, that it takes to run an election in a county this big. But that's -- the core strength are those full-time people.

And, you know, you're never going to be able to do everything to eliminate the unpredictable, you know. Just be prepared, know there will be something unpredictable, but do have that discussion with your teams, "What can we do?" I suggest, you know, twice a year just sit down, you know, and have some snacks and let's discuss, you know, what kind of things should we think of beyond, you know, the normal Election Day issue things, the normal things that you would train your Election Day workers for. Now, this is what's important, what's, "Oh, my goodness." And, you know, these kind of exchanges here, you know, learn from others that have gone through the same thing. Learn from our disaster to know what, you know, some of the things you can think about it And, you know, it's critical to get your commissioners, your county judges, whoever is out there, also bring them onboard, bring the parties in, make them know what you're doing. Communication is key, so that you don't want opposition from out there saying, "Oh, you're doing this wrong, you're doing that wrong." Bring them in as part of the process, have that discussion with them. And, of course, in Texas, when a catastrophe strikes, Texans are always ready and willing to help.

Conclusion, approximately 80,000 individuals voted in the November 2nd, 2010, election in Harris County. Half of those persons voted during the early voting period. A majority of the voting equipment during the early voting was actually borrowed, and also, over 30 percent of the voting machines used in Harris County during the election was provided by other counties. And, you know, I thank the sister counties and I want to thank Hart

InterCivic for actually being there supporting us, and being able to help us pull off the impossible when we went from blaze to praise.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you. And thank you so much for that. I want to re-emphasize what Jeannie had said, that the full presentation with video and audio will be available at the EAC Website. And I look forward to seeing that, and I think I'm going to make that viewing for the staff when I get back.

I have a couple of questions that I wanted to get you to address, and then, we'll open up the discussion for the larger group. Not every state is under DOJ supervision, and you mentioned in your presentation that you were able to get preclearance in large part because you changed very little.

MR. STANART:

Nothing was changed. From their perspective, we're still the same voting equipment. It's the same process, the same number of voting precincts. What's the change?

DR. KING:

Did that factor into -- let me restate the question. Your observations about minimizing voter education programs...

MR. STANART:

Right.

DR. KING:

...voter outreach, training of poll workers…

MR. STANART:

Yes.

DR. KING:

...I think those are really the driving issues. But did the potential challenge of getting preclearance through DOJ, did that also factor into your decision to try to go forward with the eSlate technology?

MR. STANART:

Well, yeah, I mean, that would have been another hurdle to actually jump through. You want to minimize the number of hurdles, you know. You've got to take care of the voters. Say you had a hundred less precincts. Well, that's -- if we do 100 less than 736, you might as well do 736, you know, to not cause voter confusion. So, you just press harder to make it happen. I guess, if you were 40 days out from an election, you might try to consider something else. But go for the gusto as they say, you know. Go for the whole enchilada. Make it happen if you can.

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. STANART:

And then, if we -- if something happened where you wasn't making it happen, then, maybe you have to do, "Okay, let's reconsider." But, go for the whole thing.

DR. KING:

Okay. And again, kudos to those counties…

MR. STANART:

Oh, yes.

DR. KING:

...who contributed…

MR. STANART:

Yes.

DR. KING:

…equipment and helped. Were there any reports of shortages and lines in those counties as a result of loans to Harris?

MR. STANART:

No, remember -- well, in Houston -- in Texas, our primaries typically are our busiest season.

DR. KING:

Um-hum.

MR. STANART:

Okay? I actually have -- instead of 736 precincts, like I had last November, in a primary we'll have 830, let's say, because each party runs their own election. And so, each one wants their own -- you know, they're heavier depending on what part of the county their heavier population is, and they consolidate precincts differently. So, it's not the peak. And that's typical for all those other counties. It was not their peak time. So, they're able to dip in -- they have more reserve, and so, that's what allowed them to be able to share more with us, is, they too wasn't hitting their peak.

DR. KING:

Okay. I saw a lot of media coverage.

MR. STANART:

Yes.

DR. KING:

And it's kind of cool how the tone changed as the headlines…

MR. STANART:

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

DR. KING:

…drifted towards the finish line. One of the things that we have talked about frequently, in fact, in roundtables here at the EAC, is the symbiotic relationship between the media and election officials; that we need the media, we need them to help with outreach, but they also need us for Election Day, et cetera. Could you talk a little bit about how that media relationship was managed? Because even though we couldn't hear it, it looked...

MR. STANART:

Constantly, constantly.

DR. KING:

Talk about that.

MR. STANART:

Press conferences, you know, all the time, to the media, let them know, "We're on top of this. We're working it." So, as soon as you would know something, you know, you pass that onto the media. And it was -- it got a lot of exposure, a lot of visibility. As you know, this made national attention. But, of course, you know, in Harris County, it was a focus for many, many weeks, and of course, all the way up to the election. But I think it's important to them, as well as the parties, to bring them in and let them know, this is what we're doing, these are the issues that we're dealing with. And they appreciate it. And when you're -- and it's that confidence, too, you're projecting that confidence to that voters, to the elected officials because everyone is concerned and, you know, behind the scenes you're working your tail off. In no small means was this not a lot of work, okay? You know it is, but, you know, every team in here has the ability -- across the country, every election

administrator, every county clerk has the ability to pull this kind of stuff off. Just do what you do. You're the experts. You're the ones who know how to pull this off.

DR. KING:

Okay, Jeannie has a question.

MS. LAYSON:

I wanted to also ask you, along the same lines, was your approach to have a regularly scheduled update for the media even if you had nothing new to report? So, would you, say, talk to them like, you know, every day, you know, at noon? Or did you have a regularly scheduled time to update them?

MR. STANART:

Well, at first, you know, it was pretty much a daily; the Friday, the Monday, you know. I'm not sure it was every day. Of course, there's a point where you can overdo any kind of media…

MS. LAYSON:

Um-hum.

MR. STANART:

…if you don't have anything to say. But things were moving so fast you could always give a report, we brought on some more counties, any kind of -- the letters that went out to the counties, you know, you made those kind of available to the media, "This is what we're asking from other counties" because we mass mailed to everyone that was using Hart type equipment. Hopefully, you know, the Secretary of States will pick up this ball, like I was saying, that you know where you'd have a one-stop shop, you know, go to them to, you know, to be able to know who has what. And your vendors can

also tell you who has what, to a large degree, too, but they don't always tell you how many they'll have available. That's something that the agreements would have to be worked out for the counties.

DR. KING:

All right, one of the things that we've seen in insurance claims is, fortunately, if there is a well crafted policy in place, there is restoration, but it's all predicated on inventory records. I'm curious about whether there were any observations that you could share in terms of maintaining complete and accurate inventory records, as the precursor to making insurance claims.

MR. STANART:

You are exactly right. We had a database of all of our inventory in the computer that was at the warehouse that was burned down.

[Laughter]

MR. STANART:

But that was backed up, okay?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Offsite, in Arizona.

MR. STANART:

It was in Arizona, and it was also offsite ten miles away, where we actually keep our back-up tapes, in town, okay? Back-up your databases, okay? That database of inventory and the records that we had of all the purchases and stuff, to be able to put those together has been critical to be able to present to our insurance company what we had, that detailed list. That's very important to have that when you start going through the insurance claim. And it's worked great. I mean, I look at this and it's like we had

replacement cost insurance, okay? So it's working out good. I've got new equipment across the board and we've got everything replaced. So, you know, a new building, so we're shining, we're happy about this. So, you know, the disaster actually became something that we're thankful for in Harris County.

DR. KING:

One other question deals with the security, and it reminds me of an observation that Shelley made earlier, which is, when they moved from one location to the next, it changed the vector that you start from for deploying your emergency procedures. At your old warehouse, you had established security procedures that evolved over a period of time. When you made that abrupt change to a new facility at the arena...

MR. STANART:

Reliant, yeah.

DR. KING:

...how did you go about assessing the security needs? How much of a challenge was that? And what did you take away from that experience?

MR. STANART:

What kind of security do you mean?

DR. KING:

Physical security of the facility.

MR. STANART:

Oh, it was pretty much the same. They had a secure facility there. We had the same personnel. And, remember, they're working tons of time, so they're there all the time anyway. The security is all

these people working their tail off who were putting together, you know, equipment and everything to be able to actually execute. 67 days is not a lot of time. There is a lot to do. So, that wasn't really an issue there, but it was more just doing work.

DR. KING:

Okay, well, let me expand the question, now, out to group at the table. One of the things that, and Stan mentioned this, that initially there was possibly some skepticism about the ability of the office to respond to something as devastating at losing 100 percent of your gear. How can county and local election officials maintain credibility with voters in a similar situation like this? What are some of the strategies, things you may have done, or things that you consider to be effective in communicating to the voters that, "We are going to have an election, it is going to be a successful election, and it's business as usual, here, in an unusual way," perhaps? And Shelley, I'll start with you.

MS. McTHOMAS:

I think one of the things that Harris County did very successfully is that they managed the public's expectations. They put the message out there from the very beginning, "No problem, we've got this. We will have an election." And once you say it and you put it out there, people begin to believe it and then they pick up on the message. And the media seemed to. And, obviously, someone was working very closely with the media. So, you manage the expectations once you get past your "OMG" stage and, "Oh, what are we going to do" and you shed your tears. But communicating to the public was just critical and I think they did that very, very well.

They were having regular press conferences or providing information to the media. I mean, this was the biggest story in the county, probably, for weeks…

MR. STANART:

Um-hum, yeah.

MS. McTHOMAS:

…leading up to the election, and so, they did it all very well.

I had a question. I wondered if you all wrote a white paper on this or documented it, so that we all could have it, you know, just in case…

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

You were a little busy.

[Laughter]

MS. McTHOMAS:

…since last year…

MR. STANART:

They're still tired from all that.

MS. McTHOMAS:

…because I don't know if there's been such a disaster like that in recent election administrator history, and we certainly could all learn from it.

MR. STANART:

Other than this presentation, I have one that's a little bit longer than this one, believe it or not, that actually -- that details what happened. That's probably the biggest thing that we've done.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Um-hum.

MR. STANART:

Now, I did ask our elections administrator what thing would he have done differently, okay? And I think you will be a little bit surprised about his answer. His answer was, “Wouldn’t have done paper” because it was a lot of work for 9,600 votes.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Right.

MR. STANART:

Out of 800,000, that was a small number because when you had every one of these, I mean, little old ladies running a precinct, tracking away two or three cases of paper, you know, yeah, we took them to the car and put them in there, but logistically dealing the paper. Now, if we hadn’t have had the issues with preclearance that that’s what we already submitted to DOJ, that’s one of the hassles of being down in the South is -- and to have gone back and changed that, we would have dropped paper when we figured out we had enough machines…

MS. McTHOMAS:

Right.

MR. STANART:

…because that’s -- electronic machines, as you can see, this is what our people are used to, this is what they knew how to vote on, and this was their choice. So, if we could have done anything differently, I think not ultimately using the paper, too, would have helped logistically. Also, it just took that much longer for us to finish counting, it was five or 6:00 in the morning. Just everything, you know, different doing two systems.

DR. KING:

Okay, Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, Merle, I think Stan just demonstrated to us what -- why they were successful and what makes a good election official. He remained flexible and he didn't let anybody see him sweat.

MR. STANART:

That's right.

[Laughter]

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

You know? That -- I mean, I think that was what was going on on the screen and that was clearly what was going on in your presentation. It wasn't working the way you wanted it but, you know, you know you didn't let it show and you stayed flexible and moved around it. And so, I think just that in itself is a sufficient message to our colleagues of how one succeeds in rough times.

MR. STANART:

That's right.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Congratulations. That's an impressive -- congratulations to your staff, too. I join you in that.

MR. STANART:

Oh yeah, you can ask Johnnie. He...

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

But I noticed Bev was smiling in every picture.

MR. STANART:

Yes, you can ask Johnnie. He would say that he was sweating bullets.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Yeah.

MR. STANART:

But I guarantee you that, yeah, you're going to sweat bullets. But just work hard. Do what you know how to do. You guys are the experts in this. So, if you do that, you know, it can be pulled off.

DR. KING:

Ed?

MR. SMITH:

And to build on what you just said, because it dovetails into my comment, is that you came out very quickly with a plan.

MR. STANART:

Yes.

MR. SMITH:

So, you knew what you needed to do. And to Merle's question directly, the media -- the media would like nothing better than to be able to say, "These clowns don't even know what they're doing."

MR. STANART:

Right.

MR. SMITH:

"They don't even have a plan," you know? But once you put forth a plan, okay, you have some degree of control over the situation. At least, you know what you're going to do, as you just stated. And then, also, they can benchmark you against the plan. So now, assuming they're rational media, they will watch and as long as you

stay to your plan and you are on the road to success, generally, they'll objectively report that. Yeah, and like has been observed, the headlines turn from, "Oh wow," to "It looks like it's going to happen," to ultimately, "It did happen, hurray, and then kudos." Had you not come out with a plan early, though, I think you would have taken more shots at the beginning, and set somewhat of a bad tone that would have carried for awhile rather than you had a plan, you were in front of Commissioners Court very quickly the following Monday...

MR. STANART:

Yes.

MR. SMITH:

…and then, off you went. That was very wise.

MR. STANART:

You're right, that hard work that weekend, I know they worked, you know, that whole weekend constantly putting together, down on paper, "Here's the list of equipment. This is the cost." And went to Commissioners Court, and I believe that number they approved was $13 million on that Monday just to start kicking it off.

MR. SMITH:

Um-hum.

MR. STANART:

And to be able to do that and to get that vote and to be able to just start executing immediately, critical, yeah, very critical.

DR. KING:

Okay, Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well the two things that I noticed in being an elected official, just like you are Stan, was number one, you handled the press issue very well by calling them in it first, and from the beginning just keeping them informed.

And the other part that impressed me, I think it was Lyndon Johnson who said this, and it's not that politically correct, but you used the tent strategy as I understand, to me is what it is. In other words you'd rather have them -- have everybody in the tents...

MR. STANART:

Yes.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

...relieving them outsides the tent rather than relieving themselves into the tent.

MR. STANART:

Exactly.

[Laughter]

MR. JAGNEAUX:

So, I thought that was a good idea because that put everybody on the same team, more or less.

MR. STANART:

Yeah, it's a team.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

They couldn't criticize you because they were part of the process.

MR. STANART:

Yeah, bring everybody in.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Yeah.

MR. STANART:

And -- because we're going to run elections in Harris County, we're going to follow the law, we're going to do everything to make sure that every person has their vote and their vote is kept and counted correctly.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

And you kept in contact with them, just like I said, you kept them all in the tent and up to speed.

MR. STANART:

Yes.

DR. KING:

Who was the face of Harris County elections during that period of time? Who consistently met with the media?

MR. STANART:

That was Beverly -- Beverly did that. Largely, that was Beverly Kaufman, the County Clerk, the same person that was in that position before me. So…

DR. KING:

And do you think that's important to have that consistency of the same individual?

MR. STANART:

Yes, yes, yes, yeah. The elected official, if there is one, that's responsible for elections, or if there's, you know, an election administrator, the person whoever is responsible, that's who -- the voters are looking for who's responsible, okay, you know. If there's an EA, maybe you could -- a county judge might be considered a responsible person, but I think that consistency is important to the

voters that they got someone they can look to, “Oh, he’s taking care of this problem,” or, “She’s taking care of this problem.”

DR. KING:

Okay.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

And also, you know, the general perception that even I got from your presentation was from the very beginning someone was in charge. I think you had that in your…

MR. STANART:

Yes.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

...presentation, you know, define who’s in charge. And I think, you know, when you can define, “Someone is in charge of this, we’re on top of this,” then the uncertainty seems to melt away and people, you know, join in. That’s a great story of being behind the eight ball and coming out from behind it. It’s the kind of things people like to cheer for. But you’ve got to -- somebody has got to be in charge of it.

MR. STANART:

Yes, yep.

DR. KING:

In Charlie’s presentation, I had asked him to reflect back on the plan…

MR. STANART:

Um-hum.

DR. KING:

...once the plan had been put in place. Are there things that you would have changed in the plan or things that you changed in the planning process as you kind of debriefed and evaluated how well you executed it? And, obviously, the results speak for themselves, but beyond that, because we're always looking to make incremental improvements in what we do, are there any reflections on how that process or the plan could be improved?

MR. STANART:

Like I said, the only thing that I was -- when asked that question was, you know, not use paper because the extra logistics in something not normal to the election workers or the voters. It was an extra level of complexity that ultimately it would have been nice not to have to go down that path.

But what I've seen, what we've discussed since then, I'm not sure that there would have been -- I mean, there's always tweaks and little things here and there, but largely that's -- it's just hard work, you know. If the experts do the same thing they've always been doing, I think that's critical, is do -- as much as possible do it the same way, and then just do it well, then that's what your goal is.

DR. KING:

All right, to what extent do you think the experience that you had in Harris County, in the way in which the other counties put the shoulder to the wheel and assisted, has this now become a part of the fabric of elections, in that, should this kind of emergency occur in other counties, that they would look at this as a model, at least one way, in which to respond?

MR. STANART:

It got a lot of visibility. And like I said earlier, you know, we've had this meeting of the minds, as we call it, the counties around Harris County. And we had a representative from the Secretary of State there and were proposing to them, you know, this agreement, inter-county agreement, so that we could do something for the state, so that they're already pre-done, such that when there is an emergency the counties that have already, you know, gone through their Court and got approved the ability for them to be able to go help, of course, with consideration that they be reimbursed for any costs. If that could be pre-done and, you know, the central -- the Secretary of State would be kind of the keeper of the list that would be something that would be very beneficial to, I think, all concerned.

DR. KING:

Okay very good. All right, well, I thank you for that. That's an inspiring story I have to say.

I also think Shelley's question about producing this on a white paper is really relevant. And one of the great things about a white paper is it's really freestanding and people can kind of tease it apart to look for the details. So, in your spare time…

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

…in between now and November, get this into a white paper, post it at the EAC Website.

MR. SMITH:

Since it's September 20th like it is.

MS. LAYSON:

Yes, please let me know when it's finished so we can post it.

MR. JAGNEAUX:

That's about 67 days, isn't it?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Right.

MR. SMITH:

Don't worry about that pre-election logic and accuracy testing, maybe next month. It will take care of itself.

[Laughter]

DR. KING:

You know, often I think those of us who study elections, we frequently scratch our heads at how often our colleagues seem to have to touch the same hot stove just to make sure it burns. And so, there's many, many illustrations, unfortunately, of events that you wonder why they keep repeating, and yet this is an event that we should be repeating. This is the kind of thing that we should be sharing and institutionalizing into the lore of elections, into how we train young election officials that are coming on. So, it's a great story, and thank you for sharing it.

MR. STANART:

You're welcome.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

You know Merle, it seems to me that there are certainly plenty of people that -- who spend a great of time looking at and writing about the failures in the business; that this would be a wonderful opportunity for those people to observe and write about a success that has taken place. And this is -- I think, maybe an outside view

of it would be an even more interesting white paper than an internal.

MR. STANART:

Yeah.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

I mean, you know, they lived it.

MR. STANART:

Right.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

But looking at it from the outside and analyzing it would be pretty interesting.

DR. KING:

Okay, well thank you. We're approaching the end of our roundtable together, and this is the time where I like to ask each of the participants to kind of reflect on what you've heard here today, reflect on the subject matter in general, and share with the rest of the panel what your takeaways are, the small handful of things that you are think are relevant. The things -- I think everybody here has put a couple of things down that they're going to look at when they get back to the office and make sure that they're doing, et cetera.

And to that end, even though you were all sitting in different places this morning, I think I'd like to start with Shelley. And, in part, that's because she may have to leave to catch a flight soon. But if you could, share with us your takeaways from today's discussions, the things that you think are most relevant and most necessary for you as an election official to reflect on, internalize and operationalize.

MS. McTHOMAS:

Quite a few takeaways, and this was very informative. I was trying to jot them down. A couple of them involve identifying ways to help our staff communicate with their families in case of a disaster and that way they can feel comfortable and continue to do the job that we have to do.

The concept of citizens being first responders out there in the field, they can tweet to us or call in and let us – share. They can be our eyes and ears along with our own poll workers as to what's really going on out there.

Making the police stations or fire departments emergency drop-off points, I thought that was an excellent point, I hadn't thought of that, and something that we will put in our plan. Keith saying that fire trucks can serve as generators, I think, I knew nothing about that. That's an excellent resource that I'm taking away.

Having these intergovernmental agreements in place, in advance, is very crucial. Even though we all work together, you know, we're all agencies in the same state, that's kind of an "aha" moment, you mean I would have to get some kind of Court Order or something to borrow equipment from my sister county?

The amateur radio operators, that question that came in or that suggestion that came in was an eye opener, also, to use them in the event of an emergency.

Finally, staying calm and not letting them see you sweat and managing the public's expectations, putting your story out there,

because, as we know, if there's a vacuum of information, others will fill that vacuum.

So, those are my key learnings from today's session.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Shelley. Shelley, if we come to visit you in Kansas City, will you give us a tour of your new facility?

MS. McTHOMAS:

Absolutely, it's wonderful.

DR. KING:

That is a phenomenal building.

MS. McTHOMAS:

We'll give you a tour and throw some barbeque in with it.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Done deal.

MR. SMITH:

Yes, ribs please.

DR. KING:

Thank you. Keith?

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Well, I have many of the same notes that Shelley has, and I'm sure others do too. I've come away from this understanding a lot of things better. I also hope that what we have demonstrated here is just how hard working elections people are. The director of The Election Center, Doug Lewis, said a number of years ago, that people think elections are easy because election administrators make them appear that way. And I think we've seen that, Charlie

recovering from probably the largest natural disaster we've ever seen.

But I'm going to walk just a little different line, here, for a second, if you don't mind, and that is why we're doing this, the forum we're doing this in and who is -- who has us here doing that. And that is the United States Election Assistance Commission. And I think what, hopefully, those of you that have watched this, and as the rest of us have listened to one another and picked things up, you've, hopefully, picked things up, too. And I think, therein, we see the value of the United States Election Assistance Commission, and we understand why it should be continued as a government agency, and why we need to have this type of an organization that allows us this type of voice, these types of forums, these types of publications, and the myriad of things that those of us that are election officials, "A" get to express through the organization; and "B" the takeaways that we come away with.

So, I have pages and pages of notes here of things that I certainly will take back to, not only our office but my colleagues and share. And, frankly, I might even steal a couple of them in a future presentation

But Merle, thank you very much for doing a great job. And to my colleagues here, this has been a good day. Thank you for sharing what you know and enlightening me just a little bit.

DR. KING:

Okay thank you, Keith. Stan?

MR. STANART:

Oh, boy, lots of stuff today. I think the thing that kind of stood out is while I knew it it didn't really ding, okay, until Keith brought it up is it's these emergency other people that -- how it's key to make -- to know them and to work with them. I mean, I saw them. They were there during the fire. They were there doing things. But remember I wasn't the elected official at that time, so I wasn't the one talking to them and that necessarily had that, you know, relationship with them. I know our county judge well, and he's in charge of emergency preparedness for Harris County and I know some people that work over there, but I don't necessarily know all the players over there. So that's something I'm going to go back is go know them, sit down and have that meeting with them and find out what other pieces of the puzzle that I need to know so that when the time comes, you know, I've got that relationship. I mean, they'll be available because the county judge will make them available to me but, you know, why wait until then? Hopefully, there is not a then, but we have to prepare everyone as we've learned today.

DR. KING:

Okay, thank you Stan.

MR. STANART:

You're welcome.

DR. KING:

Charlie?

MR. JAGNEAUX:

Well, to me, the biggest thing I've learned today is communication, sharing of all the information that we've come to learn and we've developed through trial and error, and studying all the problems.

And the unique thing about today, this is the first I've been exposed to the use of social media in emergency preparedness and emergency response. I think the technology is growing by leaps and bounds, and no telling where it will be. We all need a presence on Facebook and Twitter and all the rest of them. And like I said earlier, I'm going to develop that as soon as I get back home.

Then also, the communication part, when it's applied to the media to get your story out to reassure the public, in all cases, even if there's not a disaster, to me the -- and I may be standing on a soapbox, but the election process is the basis of our democracy, you know. Without -- I think that was the basis of the first Constitution, give everybody an equal voice in government, and the only way they can do that is by conducting fair elections and efficient ones, too. And at the same time, maintaining the public's trust in the elections, like we, you Stan, by making sure there was a seamless transition through the system. The communication, like I said, through social media, to the media themselves, to the stakeholders such as first responders, like Keith said. It's also between the election officials a lot of the collaboration, and that collaboration is motivated by making someone responsible. For instance, the Secretary of State, if they are chief election officer of the state, or countywide with the clerks and the chief judges of the election process there, put them on the spot and keep them informed. And by doing that, I think they'll be -- they'll have -- it will behoove them to keep up with everything. Also, Keith mentioned The Election Center. I'd like to add the state associations of the clerks, the state associations of the registrars of voters, the U.S.

Association of the Secretaries of State. And especially the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, I think, it would be their role, it would be to put those people on the spot, more or less, at least bring it to their attention that they need to get involved, they need to take the lead in this and not drop the ball until the next disaster.

And I really appreciate the opportunity to be here today. It's been a lot of fun and very educational to me.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Charlie. Ed?

MR. SMITH:

Back some time ago when I took my first project management course in my first job, they categorized projects, particularly manufacturing-related projects, by these five factors; man, which is now, of course, people, machines, materials, methods and environment, so four "Ms" and an "E" to make it easy to remember. And I really was brought back to that time and that class, and I've used those categories subsequent to that class many times, that if you look at -- in fact, the order that they gave it to us really mimics what order we need to consider for continuity of elections; the people by far being the most important thing. And one of the things I heard today, and it was echoed earlier, was it's not just the people on your staff but how they interact with their families, and until their families are taken care of, they're not going to give you a hundred percent. They may not give you anything, in fact, because they're going to take care of their families first, because that's where their heart and their home is.

And then, secondly, with people, dialogue is so important, all the agencies that Charlie just rattled off, the dialogue being probably one of the most important things, as it is in a lot of business relationships, is to build that relationship, build that trust. Don't exchange business cards at the time of the incident, very clearly, an important thing there.

Running a far second, not a close second, but a far -- a distant second is the machines, and then materials. So, all of the paper tapes, the election records that we saw in the photos, all of the databases and such, all of those materials and consumables that help you run the election and form the basis for quite a bit of the election environments.

The methods; how you do things, keeping, storing, putting into people's heads how to go about the standard election operations, and then, what to do when there's a contingency and how to deal with those, how you train. I heard that, as well.

And then, the environment, setting up an environment for success, the motivation the hard work that you saw with the Harris County recovery, the post-Katrina recovery of people. The thought about the mold being toxic and thus keeping people out of the warehouses and such, where they needed to be to help the records stay intact, you know, that's an environment thing. It's something that's in people's heads around their working conditions and their environment, maintaining the environment that's suitable for success through the planning, the integration of plans into your operations, the periodic review of the plan and how you're going to go about executing it. And setting up people to be successful

creates an environment ultimately for success when you do have a disaster.

So those things all came to mind. And I found it interesting, as the day progressed, how planning for contingencies and dealing with them fit into that old project management model that is decades old.

And then, lastly, I'd like to thank the Election Assistance Commission, as well, for inviting me to be on this panel. It was a very interesting day, and a part of the elections process, if you want to call it that, that I don't look at or get to look at every day. So, I think this was a very timely topic to address with next year's elections. And, as Shelley commented, they just, you know, didn't know what to expect with 2008, you know. It was a very polar electorate, very high tension Presidential year. 2012, I think we can all expect more of the same. And it's going to be very important election. It's very near and dear to quite a lot of the electorate out there. And the more we can, as manufacturers, as election officials, and as folks in the Federal Government, can be prepared, the better.

So, thank you.

DR. KING:

Thank you, Ed. Ms. Layson?

MS. LAYSON:

Yes, thank you to everybody for participating today. And I also want to thank FEMA and the Red Cross for participating, as well. They were very willing to come in and help, especially for all the

things they're doing for National Preparedness Month. So, thank you to everyone.

I also wanted to, again, repeat that today's presentations, including your audio and video, will be available on our Website tomorrow, as well as an on-demand version of today's Webcast. So, anybody who didn't get to watch today, or had to come in and out, they can take a look at the Webcast tomorrow, look at the agenda, and choose specifically what they want to review so they don't have to watch the whole thing and scroll through. It's really easy to manage. So, I want to remind everyone of that.

Also again, we do have quite a few resources on contingency planning, and they were created for election officials by election officials. I've blogged about those recently, and I will blog about those again, so that everyone can find them. They'll be in once place. For example, we have election management materials on contingency planning. We also have a video that is also useful to show your poll workers, as well.

And again, we have the election official exchange, in which, if you're an election official, you can go in and sign up and offer your expertise in contingency planning. Or, if you're looking for expertise, you can find election officials there who are willing to help and share their ideas.

And again, I forgot to thank someone this morning, at the EAC, but perhaps, it's best to save it for last. I want to thank Shirley Heinz who was a big help to us today. And we couldn't have done this without her, so I want to add her to the list of people that we thanked this morning. And again, thank you, too,

Commissioner Donetta Davidson, and Commissioner Gineen Bresso, as well as Executive Director Tom Wilkey, and, of course, Brian Whitener, who works me with in communications. So again -- and thank you, Merle. We're going to be having a few more of these roundtables to prepare for the 2012 election cycle, so follow us on Twitter at eac.gov, and stay up-to-date, and we'll keep everybody informed about what we've got coming up next.

So, thank you very much.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Thank you.

DR. KING:

Thank you. Well,, as has become the tradition here, I get the last word, which I do appreciate.

I'm continually struck, and I shouldn't be, but I am, how, in the elections community, which is not only election officials, but it's lots and lots of people who have a vested interest in seeing that elections are well administered in this country, there is a tremendous amount of latent goodwill. And I think we saw that today with our colleagues from FEMA and the American Red Cross, what we heard about, with fire departments being able to help, with your local emergency management organizations, your county commissions. There's a tremendous number of people, and we are in this altogether, and altogether we are better because we are in this.

For the county election officials who have viewed this today, and hopefully, will see it on the Website, encourage them not to be daunted by scarcity of resources, even though, I think some of the

anecdotes we heard today were from large counties, perhaps, well funded in terms of resources. There are many, many things that even the smallest county can begin doing, and it is those things we heard earlier this morning, which is, know what the critical success factors are for your election, know what those essential functions are, pick up the phone and make that phone call to your local emergency management agency, and get the conversation started.

I've learned so much today, and like all of you, there's a list of things that I will take back and begin discussing with my colleagues in the State of Georgia.

Like Jeannie, I'd like to thank the EAC and the Commissioners and all the staff, here, for making really a singular and extraordinary event possible, which is this kind of dialogue with this kind of participation. And I thank all of you today. We wish you a safe journey home. And with that, the roundtable is adjourned, thank you.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

Thank you, Merle.

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[The EAC Be Ready: Contingency Planning in Elections Roundtable adjourned at 3:39 p.m.]

bw/add